Uncle Reuben in Washington

by

Charles S. Barrett

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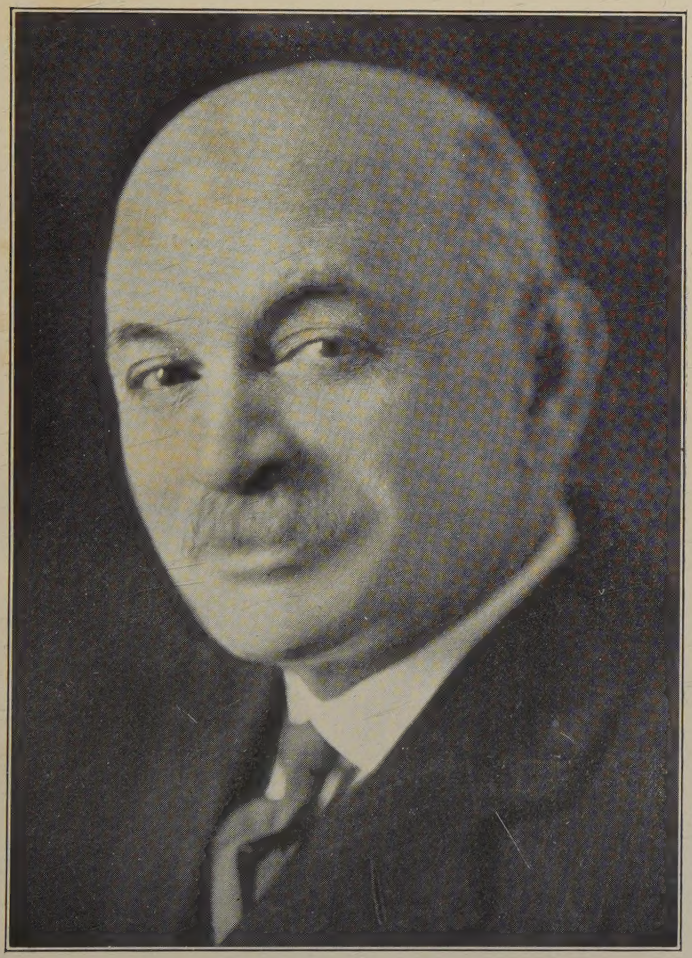

CHARLES S. BARRETT

President

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BY

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Dedication

TO those faithful in the Farmers' Union; to those earnest and honest souls who have been loyal to the farmers, loyal to their associates in the glorious work of rescuing our calling from the degradation of slavery; loyal amidst treachery, sham, and fraud; true in the midst of deceit, camouflage and lying; brave in the midst of faltering and paltering cowardice; honorable when honesty seemed to be at a premium; stalwart, self-reliant, aggressive and progressive, when men everywhere were abjectly surrendering their God-given right to stake out for themselves a place in the sun; to those tillers of the soil whom misfortune could not daunt, whom sorrow could not dismay, whom injustice could not sour, whom calumny could not discourage, who clung to hope when thousands of others were yielding to despair, who saw a sunlit sky when others could see nothing but darkness, who were faithful when their friends fell away from them and when their neighbors made light of their reputation; to those gallant souls, who, when evil tongues whispered away their good names squared their own conduct to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, who fought against overwhelming odds, who snatched victory from defeat, who so lived as to bring hope to despairing humanity, "Uncle Reuben in Washington" is dedicated.

CHAPTER I

Uncle Reuben's Mission in Washington

THE distressing truth is apparent to all who take the trouble to more than superficially examine men and their records, that the people's Government is gradually but surely slipping away from their control and into the hands of a well-trained and splendidly equipped lobby. Recognizing this fact, I see something very dark and very forbidding in the path of the people of this land.

Secret influence of government by a cabal that is able at most to speak for a very small, if very select section of our citizenhip, is more perilous than a kingdom, an empire or a dictatorship. The visible king can be dethroned, the visible emperor can be forced to abdicate and the visible dictator can be compelled to return his power to the people who loaned it to him or from whom he wrested it. But the invisible or assistant government has so entwined itself around all visible agencies that it is difficult to separate the one from the other. The two governments have become so much like the Siamese twins that it may be impossible to destroy one without killing the other.

Recognizing the mistakes of the past and fearing the perils of the future, along with many thoughtful citizens who were raised on the farms of this country, the Farmers' Union, many years ago, determined to do what it could to help save the Gov-

ernment for those to whom it belongs—the people of the United States. Having this mission imposed on us as leaders and by the manifest demands of the age, we proceeded to take measures which we hoped would result in bringing Uncle Reuben to Washington. We knew, and many advanced thinkers also knew, that unless the farmers, free from the domination of special interests, be it commerce, finance or politics, entered the lists, the Government would inevitably and irrevocably, be taken over by the secret and powerful cabal that has operated for many years at the National Capital.

And this would be done within the law. No revolution would be necessary to achieve this purpose. No blood need be spilled in the process of taking over the management of the Nation's affairs, though nobody can guarantee that the final outcome of such a "legitimate" conspiracy would be a delivered assurance of permanent peace. This book is written not merely for the purpose of showing how the farmers have been discriminated against, robbed, plundered and swindled, though a faithful narration of these facts is necessary to a complete understanding of the problem with which I have attempted to deal.

It is a national, not exclusively an agricultural question that is presented in these pages. After all the farm problem can not be detached from the other great questions with which statesmen, sociologists and thinkers in every strata have dealt. It is the parent of every problem; the father of every question, fundamental to and inseparable from, all

the realities of life. And that is why Uncle Reuben is in Washington.

I will try to identify and describe the ways, highways, byways and rocky and thorny roads he traveled before he reached his objective. I would be the last person in the world to say that because the farmer is in Washington he has reached the peak of his desires or won all for which he has for generations fought. But it is something to be able to say he is at the Capital of the Nation and that he is also recognized as a factor with which statesmen, diplomats, politicians, bureaucrats, lobbyists and the many interests which center their activities in the Nation's official home, must reckon.

It is politically unsafe to ignore him. It is industrially and economically imprudent to flout him. I am not so blissfully innocent as to nurse the illusion that the farmer is treated with respect because of a profound love for him which finds lodgment in the political, diplomatic and bureaucratic heart. I know that many statesmen in Washington are alarmed because he is in the city. They fear that he has neglected the duty of raising crops to engage in the work of influencing or attempting to direct legislation. They deplore the fact that the agrarian is beginning to understand that he is a citizen of the United States inheriting or acquiring all the political rights which belong to the man who dwells in our great cities. They would much rather that Uncle Reuben stick to his plough, follow his tractor, gather in his eggs, gin his cotton, husk his corn and thresh his wheat. What business has he to

meddle with finances, transportation, statecraft and diplomacy? These are for especially trained minds and farmers should attend strictly to their God-given mission of feeding and clothing the Nation.

Hence these statesmen resent an invasion of the Capital by your Uncle Reuben. They believe he has gone out of his sphere. They even say he has muddled up things, disarranged well-prepared political and economic programs and disturbed men in high places who are best qualified to tell the farmer what he needs and to get it for him. These gentlemen have made up their minds that Uncle Reuben on the farm is indispensable to the happiness of humanity; that he is the fountain and the mainspring of all things good, but in Washington he is a nuisance.

Why interfere with the established order of things? Let the farmer stay on the farm and continue his beneficent service of providing three square meals a day for those who are able to pay for them. That's what they say.

Men and institutions, well financed, well directed and collecting large dividends will take care of the distribution of his products and will see that he will get at least a small share of the proceeds. Men and institutions, efficient, trained in the most modern and up-to-date schools will take care of the business of financing him and they will do this with a generous and lavish hand just so long as he is able and willing to pay satisfactory commissions, bonuses, attorneys' fees and interest.

This is a nice little arrangement. Why upset it?

Why tamper with things that are well established and have long since been recognized as sound, sensible and able to endure?

Anyway, these statesmen and economists are sure that it is unwise for farmers to take political action. They believe if Uncle Reuben must have anything to say about the sale of his own products the most he should do is to organize, select leaders and then evolve a plan of marketing.

If he would confine his energies to this kind of enterprise and not bother the powers that be he would be heartily welcomed occasionally as a sightseer in Washington. But to attempt to influence legislation, to go before committees and urge that this or that bill be enacted into law, why that is an undue interference with the prerogatives of those who were selected to attend to the business of Uncle Reuben.

Recently men of eminence have been saying substantially that this being a representative Government groups of farmers should not come here and try to influence action favorable to them. It might be all right for railway attorneys, for famous men representing the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, for brilliant individuals to plead on behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers, and for astute persons, who are associated with the National Wholesale Coal Dealers' Association, to go to Washington and instruct legislators in their duties. These are trained and efficient citizens. They are welcomed because of their intellectual attainments.

Of course, the fact that they represent many billions of well-organized and well-intrenched wealth could not possibly count with statesmen who criticise the farmers for coming to Washington in organized groups. But it is a curious fact that though the farmers own and operate farms which with their equipment are worth in excess of eighty billion dollars, protesting statesmen express impatience and even alarm when these farmers go to Washington and demand to be placed in relation to the Federal Government, its bureaus and departments on an equality with the Association of Railway Executives, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Wholesale Coal Dealers' Association, the United States Steel Corporation and other highly reputable organizations.

But alas, these organizations are skilled in the art of presenting their views to Washington, while the farmers are not. Uncle Reuben knows little of sinuous diplomacy.

He is not skilled in detecting the currents, undercurrents, cross-currents of political activity in Washington. He is unable to accommodate his mind to those processes of thought deemed essential to the practiced lobbyist.

He has but one way of reaching the Congressman, the Senator or the Executive and that is by direct action.

His political sense is not nicely adjusted or delicately balanced. He only knows that what he is seeking is right or just and he expects the Con-

gressman, the Senator or the Executive to be influenced solely by such considerations.

His approach to the powers that be is sometimes abrupt because it is always straightforward. He can not throw a curved political ball and he is not expert in following the course of the political boomerang.

Unused to political or official finessing, Uncle Reuben is forced to depend upon his ability to reach his objective by making frontal movements. Political strategy with him is almost unknown.

We often call attention to the fact that the farmers have an aggregate wealth in excess of the steel corporations, the railways and the lumber interests. Why, then, are they so weak in political strategy? The answer is simple. They have not organized their forces and have failed to train men for the gentle art of lobbying.

Now that they have gone in force to the National Capital it is only natural that the intrenched interests would take alarm, that eminent statesmen unaccusomed to interference would criticise them and that even the President of the United States would be induced to say something about the "unwisdom" of trying to carry on government through groups and "blocs."

Party government is all right and even surreptitious lobbying may be tolerated, especially if carried on by famous lawyers who are able to make their approach through exclusive social or financial avenues, but the creation, right under the Capitol dome, of an organization which firmly and even

loudly demands corrective legislation for the farmers is not only an evil, but a peril. But how will this peril be abated? This is what is occupying the thought of statesmen who have long since made up their minds that things were all right and ought to be left as they are.

CHAPTER II

The Master and the Novice

ACTING on the well-established principle that if you want anything you must go and get it, all the great interests have concentrated their forces on Washington. They evidently do not care to repose a blind and unquestioning confidence in the men whom they have chosen to represent them here. They believe it is their duty to aid Congress in making laws, to assist the President and his associates in administering them and to supervise and control as far as they can all the means through which popular opinion is able to function. The men they send here to do their work compose the assistant government of the nation.

Thinkers, men who know the curves, the culverts, the cross-roads and the intersecting highways often ask whether a law or policy finally enacted by Congress or promulgated by the executive branches, is the product of the actual Government, or of the assistant government. They shudder when they think that the visible Government has, at times at least, been reduced to the position of window dresser for the assistant government.

Membership in the assistant government is obtained in a very simple way. All you have to do is to prove that you can "deliver." To qualify for admission either to the inner circles of the social lobby, or the assistant government, which some

well-informed persons say is the same thing, it is not essential that you prove yourself an intellectual giant.

It is most important that the novice who enters the inner circles of the assistant government, have no opinions of his own. These are formed for him in advance and are delivered to him immediately he is initiated, with the stern command that he keep within the limits prescribed.

The little coterie which forms opinions and manufactures jokers, is never seen in public. The galleries in the Senate are seldom graced by their presence and they are never guilty of the crude work of calling a Senator from his place in the Chamber so that they may discuss with him the merits of certain proposed legislation. The assistant government is not crass. It is a master in finesse and behaves under all circumstances with the utmost circumspection. The visible lobbyist is not he who changes senatorial minds overnight and converts policies almost in the twinkling of an eye. The lobbyist who is generally known occupies a position, at best, on the outskirts of the real assistant United States Government.

Farmers have acquired the habit of believing that this is a Government by the people, through representatives of their own choosing. They are attached to the doctrine that government exists and functions through the consent of the governed. They do not regard this as a THEORY, but a FACT of government. They also think that their views are the views of all persons who are loyal to flag and

country. They would be surprised, however, to learn that in the United States are hundreds of men directing great affairs, who in their heart of hearts, have a contempt for the idea of popular government. They think the form we have may possibly be all right, but the substance should be in their hands.

This is the theory of the assistant government. Operating behind closed doors and approaching members of both branches of Congress through camouflaged highways, the assistant government and the social lobby are gradually but surely undermining the confidence of the members in the ability of the people to govern. They are surely coming around to the idea that there must be some kind of a supergovernment, keeping its identity forever under the rose.

Uncle Reuben has no objection to big business. Indeed, he knows that in these days when all things are done on a large scale, industry must be great and far reaching. But he does believe that the larger business is the more responsive it should be to righteous, popular demand and the more loyal it should be to the Government and all for which it stands. Assistant government is not all corrupt, is not all tainted, is not all repressive, but its very existence is a threat and a menace to free institutions.

Recently excavation for a great building to be occupied by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States was made. Washington is not a commercial city, it is not an industrial city. It is a political city, the official abode of the representa-

tives and servants of the people of America. So why, the innocent bystander would ask, do we need in that city a great and magnificent structure dedicated to something which has practically no existence there?

Washington is not even a jobbing center. It has a few department stores, enough meat markets to supply the needs of the inhabitants temporary and permanent, some hotels and other estabilshments necessary where any considerable group of citizens assemble. But not by the widest stretch of imagination could a person call it a commercial or industrial community. But the Chamber of Commerce of the United States has determined to spend several million dollars on a building in which a veritable army of clerks will be employed. It will likely install a printing press and engage the services of a number of brilliant newspaper men. It will also retain an expensive counsel and put on such a general appearance as may well be calculated to awe the man of ordinary intelligence.

Fortunately for the White House, the Chamber has chosen a site immediately north of LaFayette Park, across which can plainly be seen the Executive Mansion. It is true that there are some intervening trees, but possibly the City Commissioners can be induced to so trim the branches as to remove all obstacles to a first-class ocular view of the White House both day and night. As the intervening park is well lighted, it is easy to obtain nocturnal views of the Executive Mansion.

It is not likely that those who selected the site for

the building allowed themselves to be persuaded into the notion that through its erection Washington would be converted into a city of commercial and industrial importance. To be plain, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, believed by erecting such a building and installing all the equipment essential in so important a place, the influence of that organization on legislation would be greatly enhanced. Logically no other conclusion is possible.

I am not criticising the Chamber of Commerce of the United States for becoming one of the watchdogs of the Government; I am only calling attention to a fact.

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CHAPTER III

The Struggles of Public and Private Lobbies

LOBBYING is one of the best outdoor and indoor sports in Washington. It is a sport that is indulged in on the golf links, at the race tracks, at private dinners, at afternoon teas, at social functions, fancy dress balls, secret confabs, in fact, everywhere where officialdom gathers. It is a thrilling game and naturally the higher the stakes the more exhilarating the mental exercise. It is a game that is not limited or hampered by rules. Success is the only standard by which the fitness of the players can be measured. Failure summarily eliminates the unfortunate contestant and there is no appeal. The public lobby speaks more loudly, but the private lobby gets more substantial and more immediate results. It is said that great bodies move slowly and perhaps that is the reason some great business or industrial organizations place their trust in a single lobbyist. Or it may be that what the Scripture says of one man chasing a thousand has made its impress on their minds.

I am not going to deny that the people operating in unison and speaking with one voice have been able to get results for themselves. Most certainly they have. For instance, they got the parcel post law. But it took forty years of requests, demands and agitation to bring this to pass. It was

perhaps the greatest lobby that ever operated. The paper on which resolutions were written demanding the enactment of this law, if gathered into one pile, would provide the materials for a bonfire whose flames would probably be seen by the inhabitants of Mars. Congressmen, Senators, Governors, publicits, labor leaders, farm organization leaders, Consumers League officers and thousands of others had thundered their demands for this law. But as John Wanamaker said, four substantial "reasons" were successfully urged against the plan to put the Government in the express business. These were the four great National Express Companies and for four decades they succeeded in setting at naught the will of the people. Finally the bill, first proposed by farmers, passed and the people have been saved many millions each year through its operation. Forty years of lobbying by virtually all the people of the United States for an incontestably just measure is a remarkable contribution to the history of this Republic.

But while it took the people of the country forty years to lobby through Congress a measure which would save them some millions of dollars annually, Alfred Pembroke Thom, general counsel for the Association of Railway Executives, managed in about forty days to obtain for the railroads, guarantees and advances worth millions of dollars. The people demanded that money be saved for themselves. Mr. Thom demanded that money be GIVEN his clients, the railroads. As a single-handed lobbyist this very astute lawyer, has proved

himself to be more efficient than a score of millions of voters working in unison for a common cause.

Mr. Thom had the advantage of playing a lone hand and in that hand as the sequel shows he held the winning cards. Moreover, he was not hampered by persons and committees having suggestions to offer and proposals to make. Mr. Thom was well managed because he managed himself. He was well cooperated because he cooperated himself. He was well controlled because he controlled himself and he was well directed because he directed himself. Perhaps it was because Mr. Thom has so efficiently organized, managed, cooperated, controlled and directed himself that he was able so swiftly to convince the required number of Congressmen and Senators that his views were both correct and safe. Anyway he soon obtained what the railroads demanded and the public treasury opened its gold gorged vaults and surrended into the keeping of the railways, piles of their glittering contents.

Shortly after the Civil War—some say even before that tragic event—the people in mass demanded that United States Senators be elected by the direct vote of the people instead of by the legislatures of the several states. A sort of a spontaneous public lobby was created and began to insist that Congress submit to the States the question of whether this change should be made. Very few men of any note opposed it. Naturally those statesmen who, like Secretary of War Weeks, believed that too much democracy is bad for the peo-

ple, took a gloomy view of this agitation. The farmers wanted the constitutional amendment, labor wanted it, the great masses of urban citizens urged that it be adopted. Every organization which spoke for, or thought they spoke for, the people or any considerable number of them adopted resolutions urging the proposed reform. But this lobby also tramped through the wilderness for at least forty years before the promised land of actual achievement was reached.

When the farmers demanded the free delivery of their mail they were supported by a vast majority of the thinking and progressive citizens of the United States, but they, too, were obliged to wander through a wilderness of ignorance and prejudice for a period approximating two decades before they reached the promised land. The private lobby had succeeded in long withholding benefits from the public lobby, whose purpose was of the most beneficent kind.

When the railways demanded for themselves the public domain or enough of it to accommodate teeming millions of American citizens little difficulty was experienced in obtaining the legislation necessary to the accomplishment of this most patriotic purpose. Those who are in the habit of repeating the old saw that great bodies move slowly would be inclined to modify their conclusions if they could visualize the celerity with which statesmen acted when they decided to alienate many millions of acres of the land of the people, in exchange for service, more or less imaginary. No

legal barriers were allowed to stand against the determined purpose of the nation's lawmakers to do what the private lobbyist had convinced them was for the best interests of the country. Congress with the utmost speed found the legal authority, or created it, for giving away the country's property.

For fifty years the conscience of the Nation has been shocked and appalled by the annual destruction of children in many of our factories and workshops. Infants, half starved, their little bodies stunted, their immature minds dulled or brutalized, denied the God-given right to play and romp, to be fondled and loved, have raised their ghostly arms, appealing to Congress, year after year for release from such infernal injustice. But our lawmakers, who have been able to give immediate relief to the railways, who have found the way to subsidize manufacturers, who have taken excellent care of the great financial institutions, have not been able, or apparently willing, so far, to find a way to stop the murder of the souls and bodies of these helpless children.

The whole Nation is lobbying against the iniquity spoken of here. Every human heart from which spurts or flows the red blood of true manhood or true womanhood demands that this curse be lifted from the conscience of the Nation. But Congress seems to be as helpless as the legendary babes in the woods. Congress passes the buck to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court passes the buck to the Constitution.

There were no constitutional barriers interposed

when the coal barons set out to possess themselves of the fuel deposits in the country, but when it was proposed to regulate the activities of these gentry, an earnest, solemn and stentorian appeal was made to the organic law of the land. National or state legislation essential to the acquisition by the barons of what they thought to be a desirable part of the public domain was enacted with a speed which would have astounded the mythical Celeres. But when an attempt was made to force the barons to treat the public with some degree of fairness, an array of legal talent which would have staggered Blackstone came forward with protests and alleged proof of the constitutional inability of Congress even to publish facts and figures concerning their operations.

Reactionaries and progressives united in denouncing the coal barons and their confederates. But the mine operators stood pat and a few of them succeeded in strangling, or holding in abeyance the public lobby, for at least three years. Everybody asked for relief and it was very difficult to find a man in either branch of Congress who was not willing to denounce the "Coal gougers." A committee on reconstruction and production was created by the Senate. This committee gathered volumes of testimony and presented an array of facts and arguments which convinced the country that the consumers of coal were paying a very heavy and very unjust toll to somebody. But no effective legislation was enacted. The best that could be had was a "Fact Finding Commission."

The Commission was created and is composed of eminent men, but it is hoped we will not be regarded as discourteous if we say that millions of patient citizens are wondering if that body will ever find any facts worth recording. The private lobby is quite able to conceal facts, and it is feared that it may cover them so deeply as to make it impossible for even this most efficient Commission to bring them to the surface.

The efficiency of those who travel the route to the sacred money vaults of the country is well illustrated by an incident which made at the time a deep impression on my mind. Mr. J. H. Patton thought it would be an excellent thing to hold a world convention of agriculturists in Jacksonville, Florida. What Mr. Patton wanted was $10,000 to entertain the visitors and delegates. Of course, $10,000 is not much when used in the interests of agriculture, even to show visitors and delegates a good time. Mr. Patton, however, could be a good host if Uncle Sam provided the means. So he succeeded in getting a resolution through both Houses of the National Congress authorizing the President to use ten thousand dollars of public money for this purpose.

Owing to some difference in the House and Senate resolutions it was referred to a conference of Representatives of both Houses. The matter had been so quietly and unostentatiously steered through the two Chambers that it was not until the conferees began to discuss it that it was called to the attention of officials of the Farmers' Union.

We succeeded in convincing the conferees that it was not wise to use public money to finance private conventions, no matter how excellent their purpose. Consequently, the matter never reached the White House.

The private lobbyist has a decided advantage when it comes to methods of attack and approach. He is the general, the colonel, the major, the captain, the lieutenant, the second lieutenant, the top sergeant and the privates all in one.

Another episode in our history which most strikingly illustrates the temporary helplessness of the public lobby when opposed by the astute and resourceful private lobby, is seen in the long and arduous popular fight for the creation of governmental bodies for the regulation of interstate and intrastate traffic. The railways resisted for more than a generation what was practically a unanimous demand for public regulation of their business. Finally the people partially prevailed, though the present situation in relation to the railways is far from satisfactory. The right of the Government, however, to regulate railway traffic has been established. But at what a cost!

It happens sometimes, but rarely, that the private lobby stubs its toes. The failure of the proposed Liberian loan to navigate the Senate is fresh in the minds of all readers. This proposed raid on the Treasury was indorsed by a large majority in the House, but even this testimony to its respectability did not relieve it of certain offensive odors. The smell, or I should say, variety of smells, proved

too much for some Senatorial nostrils. Some Senators said the object of the loan was to make good certain bonds of the alleged Republic of Liberia, deposited with some Wall Street bankers. This charge was somewhat feebly resented by champions of the measure, but that there was a gentleman of more than usual opacity in the Liberian woodpile seemed to be the common understanding. So the bill was recommitted to the committee which reported it. That is a polite way of ejecting it from the Senate. In this case the private lobby made a tactical blunder. By asking Congress to grant the loan through the enactment of legislation directly authorizing it was to make a most unfortunate and very costly frontal attack. There were other ways, perhaps more devious but certainly less dangerous, of placing in the hands of the administrators of the black Republic five million gold dollars.

The private lobby failed when it attempted to obtain an absolute embargo on the importation of German dyes and chemicals. The Chemical Foundation, which has been declared to be one of the many aliases adopted for prudential reasons by a certain powder company, made the blunder of bringing a great international lawyer to argue their case before the Finance Committee of the Senate. Then it didn't take the precaution to conceal from the public the fact that this eminent Blackstonian had received an enormous fee for his services. But even at that the public lobby which was pitted against the private lobby had a close call. Were it

not for a few determined men in the House who succeeded in recommitting the tariff measure to the conference, with instructions to strike out the offensive embargo, the private lobby, nowithstanding its blunder, would have strangled its public competitor.

CHAPTER IV

The Lobby Trust

NOW Uncle Reuben has made up his mind that things can not and will not remain as they are. He is fully determined that there will be a change.

He has made up his mind that the farmer in Washington must receive the same respectful consideration as, for instance, is accorded Alfred P. Thom, chief lobbyist for the Association of Railway executives, or Judge Emery of the Manufacturers' Association. He thinks that President Kirby of the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, though he deals in a commodity which we all need, should not be accorded the front seat in the political theater while he is forced to occupy a part of the space designed by the sign "standing room."

Farmers are willing to concede that the gentlemen spoken of, occupy the front seats because by the exercise of well developed talents, supplemented by long experience in Washington, and because they have been able to remove gently all obstacles to their progress. Still it is strange to some that a billion dollar industry is often able to reach the official ear in Washington while an industry eighty times that size has been compelled to warm its heels in anterooms for hours, days, weeks, and even months, before getting an opportunity to

reach the political mogul who may sit temporarily in the chair of power.

But these men who reach the official ear with celerity have with wonderful skill surveyed mapped out and blue printed all the avenues, streets, and byways through which they must travel before attaining their objectives. The stranger who comes to Washington on business with some department or bureau walks right into an official maze and wanders in a circle getting more tangled as he proceeds. Not so with the accomplished lobbyist who assiduously attends to the interests of the packers, the wholesale grocers, the steel trust, the coal trust, the lumber trust, the railway trust, the money trust or the lobby trust. The last two words may cause a smile of incredulity, but I can assure the reader that there is such a thing as a lobby trust. Articles of incorporation have not yet been applied for and it has no legal existence, but that it is in operation nobody who knows conditions here will deny.

The lobby trust is an organization for mutual help. Its members representing a variety of interests, independent, dependent, interdependent, have decided that nobody can get into the ring who is not able to ride a political kicking broncho. Anyway, he must be a credit to the lobby trust and if a new man at the game, he is required to serve an apprenticeship sufficiently long and sufficiently intense. A great organization like the lobby trust must not have its nerves racked or its programs upset or twisted by novices who know little of the

gentle art of official and bureaucratic manipulation as practiced in Washington.

Mr. George H. Cushing, who does such splendid service for the coal barons by telling the country in daily articles, well, and somtimes convincingly written, that the dealers in fuel are public benefactors, instead of profiteers as they are branded by Senator Frelinhuysen (the conservative statesman from New Jersey), has a number of times proposed that cooperation between the farming, the coal and other interests would have a clarifying and elevating effect.

Reading between the lines I understand that by "elevating" Mr. Cushing thinks such an association would work a mutual improvement of public and political morals. This is an alluring idea and worth considering, but while considering it perhaps the farmers may suspect that an amalgamation of the proposed forces, while proving beneficial to the other constituent elements, might not improve the morals of the farmers.

Custom and habit have caused the varying elements out of which it is proposed to build this attractive combination to establish standards totally different to those erected by agriculture. I am not sure whether the farmers, even if given a place in that distinguished body which I call the lobby trust, would be willing to change their habits of direct action. This, perhaps, is very foolish, because by refusing to make the necessary concessions, Uncle Reuben is denied access to the map and blue prints showing with such remarkable ac-

curacy all the approaches to the official ear. Perhaps this obstinacy is founded on the well grounded conviction that after all the frontal approach, even though they may frequently be repulsed, scorned and discouraged, will prove in the end to be the right and effective way for the farmers to reach those whom they have helped put in office.

Official Washington is not in love with the pertinacious and persevering individual or organization which seeks by continuous effort to obtain consideration for views which are not indorsed by those who are "especially trained to look after such matters." The dry rot of conservatism has to a large extent corroded and choked the avenues of thought. The social lobby, which has a very real and very tangible existence, is able to punish with great severity the Senator or Congressman who departs from well established usage. Barriers which the timid fear and which make political cowards quake, stand in the way of any person seeking to correct wrongs which afflict the masses.

There are no barriers in the way of the trained lobbyist who can qualify for membership in the lobby trust. To get into, or have the approval of the social lobby it is only necessary to have the approval and indorsement of the trust. I greatly fear that Uncle Reuben will never obtain this approval or indorsement. He certainly will not unless he changes his ways, and accommodates his habits of thought and methods of conduct to systems which have been created by those hardy pioneers who have done such noble work in blazing the lobby trail.

Uncle Reuben has decided to blaze another and an independent trail. This trail will not have bewildering windings and turnings. It will reach in a straight line from his home to the Capital.

It cannot be denied that an apparent change of heart has been experienced by many statesmen in relation to the farmers since the great war. Whether this change is the fruitage of careful study of the agrarian situation, followed by an honest desire to so shape national policies as to give the farmer an equal chance with other interests to obtain deserved consideration, only time will tell. But statesmen are careful readers of the signs of the times. They carefully analyze all movements and try to give an accurate appraisement of the value, or menace to them or their party, of any organization that may come into being. Far be it from me to question or impugn the motives of statesmen who change their minds or who readily accommodate their thoughts to the shifting sentiment of their respective states or communities.

Uncle Reuben, like other people, has "seen visions and dreamed dreams." Perhaps some of his dreams have been fantastic and his visions ludicrous and wholly impracticable. But he would be totally incapable of even "dreaming" a condition which often prevails in Washington. He would never allow his mind to take in the thought that men who seldom have their names in the papers, who only on very rare occasions make speeches, who are mild in manner, the soul of courtesy and gentleness, sometimes exercise more real power than all

the legislatures of all the States in the Union combined.

They operate concealed dynamos from whence most terrific power is generated, but they speak in soft, velvety tones, never fracturing the atmosphere by the undue exercise of normal lungs. It doesn't matter to them what is said on the floor of either House. Indignant members may saw the wind and force applause both from associates and their gallery admirers, but the velvety one never raises his voice above that which drawing room decorum will allow. His work is done behind closed doors. It is he who manufactures the jokers and sees that a bill which strikes at his interest does not get to the president, if at all, until some word, section or part of a section is inserted that will effectively destroy its usefulness.

Many years ago Uncle Reuben made Washington his objective, but he was wholly unaware of the strength of the invisible government that his unsharpened and unrefined wits would be forced to contend with. His ingenuous mind contemplated a contest in the open forum where each party would lay all his cards on the table and the beaten one would gracefully admit defeat.

The invisible government does not do this. It never exposes its cards. Sometimes a fortunate individual may be able to get a peek behind the scenes, but the average citizen is never permitted to do more than guess what is in the hand. I am told, however, that the favorite card played by the invisible government is the ace of clubs. It is

said that in the estimation of this distinguished body the club is the most effective of all weapons, but it is used sparingly and when doing its most deadly work is concealed in an alluring bunch of roses.

I am not so ingenuous as to believe that the farmer has reached innermost Washington. He is in the city, but will he stay? That is for him to answer. There is no interest, political, financial, commercial or social, which will urge him to stay. His exit would be hailed with joy (by him of the velvety voice and rose club). His departure probably would be preceded by a banquet at which he would be the honored guest, with the social lobby sitting at his right and the lobby trust occupying a place of distinction on his left. Freed from a menacing peril, invisible government would once more breathe freely and the social lobby would laugh loudly as drawing-room decorum would permit.

It is only fair that I should warn the farmers that what they have obtained they must hold by the exercise of the power they have, and it is proper for me to tell invisible government that Uncle Reuben intends to hang on. He will take nothing that belongs to anybody else, but he will not be satisfied until all his rights are recognized, conceded and secure.

CHAPTER V

The Resolutions Factory

ALTHOUGH the lobby trust never sleeps, is always alert and is never found with its visor down, on rare occasions somebody manages in some way to get past its guard. Occasionally, a man comes to Washington with a bunch of resolutions under his arm and another bunch in his overcoat pocket. He has probably borrowed money sufficient to pay his railway fare and to finance his entertainment at a modest hostelry. Believing that the resolutions he brings with him may be converted into the currency of the Republic, if he exercise good salesmanship talents, he is not much worried about how he is to get out of Washington.

The lobby trust, having a voracious appetite for resolutions, is ever ready to swallow a carefully prepared and well printed list of declarations, providing these are adopted by a respectable and prominent farm organization and in their substance acquit big business of any charge of corruption, intimidation or oppression. A surprising number of these resolutions have been exchanged for the price of railway tickets, hotel bills and a little something to distribute among mutual friends.

Men who in times gone by held office in farm organizations, but had outlived their usefulness, have found in the preparation, production and sale of resolutions a good source of revenue and an attrac-

tive field in which to employ their talents. I have seen some of these traders in resolutions in action in Washington and have thought that they ought to open an office and frankly inform the public that "resolutions are for sale here." This would at least be a frank way of dealing with the public, even if it failed to produce needed or expected revenue. These citizens are able often to dispose of something of literally no value to anybody at prices which give them a comfortable temporary return.

The art of manufacturing resolutions is marvelously well developed in Washington. To obtain these resolutions it is not necessary to take wearisome journays to the backwoods where Uncle Reuben can be assembled in the country schoolhouse or a rural community center. There are enough "farmers" in Washington to make a showing which will at least impress the innocent lobbyist who may for a moment be hard pressed for an argument to present to leaders whose influence may be needed to prevent the enactment of "nefarious" legislation.

Not many years ago a collection of alleged farmers assembled in Washington and adopted a set of resolutions carefully prepared for them by lawyers who at least do not attempt to antagonize the lobby trust. These resolutions covered a multitude of matters. They tended to confuse the thought of legislators who were honestly striving to enact agricultural legislation designed to benefit alike the consumer and producer and they confirmed the "hardboiled" in their opposition to any

plan to afford relief to the basic industry of the world.

These men had at sometime in their career visited farms in some remote states. Some of them had even so manipulated local farm organizations as to obtain office for themselves as secretaries, directors or advisers. Uncle Reuben had, in plain language, been seduced and deceived by them. Trading on their past connection with farm organizations, these sly citizens had been able to convince the lobby that they had real influence and could obtain from a very respectable body of associated farmers, concrete expressions of dissent from certain proposed legislation. Of course, such efforts would need to be financed and as the lobby represented almost uncountable millions of organized wealth, why it ought to supply the necessary funds. Assured of financial support these men would proceed to obtain support from certain individuals in Washington who would have great difficulty in convincing even themselves that they represent anybody. Names would be attached to the resolutions and assurances given the public through the newspapers that these persons spoke for many million farmers.

I know of an instance where a discredited and ousted leader of a thriving farm organization, with two others of about equal standing before the farmers of the United States, prepared an imposing document which they presented to some influential United States Senators as the concrete expression of "millions of honest tillers of the soil." It was a reactionary document, bitterly opposing anything

in the way of constructive progression and assailing as bolshevists all who declined to accept the doctrine the trio preached. One Senator whose reactionary views are of the most emphatic, frank and decisive character, said the document referred to was a statesmanlike utterance which ought to find a prominent place in the sacred archives of the Nation.

Although the men who signed the document represented nobody, spoke for nobody and had no official connection with any farm organization, they were able successfully to impose on the lobby trust, to confirm the standpatters in their policy and to confuse the minds of others who were inclined to give the farmer a square deal. But they sold the resolutions and having accomplished this feat they were not particularly interested in any other result that might come from their labors.

Resolutions for sale are frequently manufactured in Washington, but the agents of special privilege are most always found at rural conventions. Of course, they go to these gatherings to learn. They are vitally and whole heartedly interested in rural problems and it would give them very deep concern to know that the interests of organized agriculture are belittled, neglected or ignored. They come on the ground to help.

They are always ready to offer advice, and they even invite presidents, secretaries and other influential leaders of organizations to dinner. There must be established working cooperation between all the interests. It is impossible for the farmer to suffer

without causing distress to all other interests. They almost shed tears when tendering advice.

They are deeply distressed because Uncle Reuben, in his straightforward way of thinking, has not been able to evolve a plan of diplomatically dealing with the followers of those who hesitate to follow him. Hence it is a patriotic duty for the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the Steel Trust, the Coal Trust, the Lobby Trust and the money trust, to follow him to his conventions and afford him necessary aid in reaching conclusions, preparing resolutions and announcing policies.

I admit that all farmers are not perfect and I am willing to accept without argument the statement made in some quarters that some farm leaders are susceptible to the kind of influence that may be beneficently exerted by agents of the lobby on behalf of Uncle Reuben. I even suspect that some of the kind suggestions offered by the special interests through the lobby at Washington have been adopted by some men whose mission in life is supposed to be to lead Uncle Reuben and attempt to bring him into the promised land of political and economic equality with other great interests.

Giving encouragement to the manufacture, importation and sale of resolutions of more than fifty-seven varieties, the lobby trust pays special attention to home industry. It knows the farmer has an unfortunate habit of occasionally raising some dust and starting some storms. The dust must be laid and the storms, if not prevented, at least

moderated. It causes me to feel pathetic when I think of the number of times that the institution which the farmers have been in the habit of picturing as a wolf appears before us in the middle of winter as a lamb with no protecting fleece. It is nice to feel that we have real friends, but it does sometimes occur to us that perhaps after all, it would be as well to fortify ourselves thoroughly before admitting, even unarmed, the courteous gentlemen who loyally serve their gentle masters.

Knowing how resolutions are prepared, bought, sold, imported and exported, as president of the National Farmers' Union, I have been very careful about giving official effect to the alleged voice of farmers as represented by specific and written declarations.

I have always been careful to try to trace the resolutions to their source, find out what special interest would be served by them and test the motives of those who inspired them. This work of the lobby in trying to prevent constructive action through the adoption by farm conventions of defective or feeble resolutions constitutes one of the most formidable barriers to the progress of Uncle Reuben toward the heart of official Washington.

Any farmer who has been honored with any responsible position by his associates must feel flattered by the attention which is given him by men in high places. He is sought out by every interest and all express a cordial and sincere desire to help him on the way. Which way is not material. The material thing is that he is offered help.

Lobbydom, as I have already indicated, is not confined to Washington. The Capital is its headquarters. But it would be a cruel libel to say that those who direct this great national and international system by which public opinion is often defeated, have overlooked anything and any means by which the voice of citizenship against that of interest can be enfeebled. Realizing that every field should be under its watchful eye the system has established lobbies wherever farmers might be expected in any influential numbers to congregate.

Sometimes this sub-lobby, as it may be called, is composed of men who really own farms, but have long since ceased to wear overalls. They may be presidents of local banks, or they may have an interest in a local commission house, or they may haply be associated with a big financial organization with its head in New York, its body in Chicago and its tentacles spreading over every State in the Union. But they have acquired local influence and are always ready to help the head of the farmer organization, with which they are in close contact, prepare resolutions and adopt policies.

These local assistants to the great lobby with its headquarters in Washington are often in contact with their chiefs through some public man who openly adopts the cause of the farmers as his own, but secretly deplores the tendency of agriculture to take organized political action.

It may be that the reader is impressed with the thought that the farmer in his progress toward inner Washington is unwilling to cooperate with any-

body and not ready to do teamwork of any kind. This is entirely erroneous. The farmers are willing to cooperate with any person or agency which has vision sufficient to comprehend the fact that only through the economic release of agriculture can the nation expect to endure as a free and independent state. This, I know, is a startling statement.

You ask, have we not a free Government? and I reply: No form of government can guarantee freedom for those who live under it; no bill of rights can secure our citizens in the enjoyment of life, liberty and pusuit of happiness; no declaration of principles will guarantee labor in the enjoyment of what it has produced and agriculture that square deal which every politician from the time of George Washington has told his constituents they are entitled to.

Bill Nye said that some folks don't care who has the earth as long as they have its fullness. And there are those who operate through the select lobby, the social lobby and the lobby trust, who are perfectly willing that the Jeffersonian ideals of Government shall be preserved and all the forms maintained, so long as they and those whom they serve, are able to collect the Nation's substance.

Farmers are always ready for conference and they have attended hundreds of them, but the net result of these exchanges of views has been expansion of lobby activities, a more determined attempt on the part of the lobby to capture and hold for their own use, farm leaders and farm organizations

and a more resolute purpose to cling to what they have accumulated.

This policy relentlessly pursued, has forced agriculture to organize. It is the greatest of economic powers, when organized with its decks cleared for action. It can be made the dominant political power, especially when it is able to convince the great toiling and sweating masses of the cities that their prosperity and happiness are wholly dependent upon the existence of a wholesome and progressive agriculture.

The farmer is ready and willing to cooperate. He wants to be on friendly terms with all who contribute anything of value to the nation and the world. But in the happy relation which the lion and the lamb would sustain to each other when sleeping in the same bed, he declines to occupy the position of the latter. At least he would want to be assured that the teeth of the king of beasts were extracted and his claws effectively manicured.

The farmer knows that human nature is of the clinging variety. It hates to be detached from anything of value that it has acquired. And so the great middleman, whose interest the lobby serves with such fidelity, cannot be expected to reach an agreement with Uncle Reuben to allow the farmer to cooperatively attend to his own business.

CHAPTER VI

Who's Who in Lobbydom

IT is not my purpose to identify every individual actively associated with the assistant government, either as aids to that organization or as parts of the institution itself. Neither do I desire to be personal only in so far as it is necessary to identify persons with systems. And if any individual mentioned here should regard himself as having been too embarrassingly advertised I have only to say that by associating himself with the assistant United States Government he voluntarily surrendered his right to exclusive privacy. No member of the actual and authorized Government can properly claim immunity from criticism or publicity and surely those distinguished gentlemen who have become the voluntary advisers of the administration, Congress and the country should not complain if their identity, together with the kind of service they perform, is made public.

In a newspaper article nearly two years ago I named some of the gentlemen associated with this unique organization, this attractive fungus growth on the political tree of our great country and here I will amplify what I then said. Some of the gentlemen whose activities I then called attention to have since retired behind the scenes. They have gone into temporary, but it is fair to say, voluntary seclusion. It would be unfair to them not to admit

that though occupying a place where the limelight, or even a searchlight does not now reach them, they still exercise influence on the affairs of the nation and of a most decided character.

Instead of operating in the glaring light, however, they are now doing most effective work in the "dark room" of American politics. And their work is of such a character as ought to command the enthusiastic approval of those persons and interests who have retained them.

It might be argued that the assistant government would not be able to work smoothly because it represents so many and apparently conflicting interests. Dear reader, don't let this thought distress you. The power and ability to create implies the power and ability to operate. This rule does not always fully apply, but ordinarily it is a safe one. The assistant government has found a way to insure harmony of action and to get agreeable results for all its members. Sometimes the collection of results is delayed, but the means of pacifying grumblers are invariably at hand.

One of the great luminaries in the sky of the assistant government is Mr. W. H. Stayton, of Baltimore. It would be unjust to Mr. Stayton to say that he is anything but highly respected, intensely cultured, agreeable and an affable man. If he was a dollar-a-year man during the war he was especially effective in seeing that no injustice was done the great shipping interests of the nation. The International Mercantile Marine and such institutions were especially fortunate in having so splendid a

man in Washington and they should all agree that Mr. Stayton was fully entitled to a dollar a year.

Just now the versatile gentleman is engaged in a dual enterprise. One is to assure the passage of the administration measure to stabilize the shipping industry by placing the Treasury, or as much thereof as is needed, at the disposal of the owners. The other is to see that dust is made of the eighteenth amendment and the Volstead enforcement act. As national head of the movement to modify the eighteenth amendment, Mr. Stayton is admitted even by those who are churlish enough not to admire all his activities, to be doing magnificent work.

In selecting Julius Barnes to head the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the directors of that organization have, according to their lights, acted with great wisdom. Mr. Barnes rightly belongs to the inner cabinet of the assistant government. He has all the qualifications necessary for such useful and distinguished service. He never perpetrates a social solecism, or commits any act of imprudence which would disqualify him for the direction of kingly industry. His great talents have been recognized not only by the United States Government, but by foreign governments as well. France has made him an officer of the Legion of Honor. He has also received medals and decorations from the Belgian Government, and it is said that were he to be entertained at royal functions in that little, but great kingdom, he would take precedence of simple barons, earls, baronets and knights.

Mr. Barnes was head of the grain corporation in the Food Administration during the war. During that period the grain exchanges were closed and the Government controlled the prices of wheat, using Mr. Barnes as the agency through which it was accomplished. In justice to that resourceful gentleman it was said he saw to it that the minimum price named by the administration for wheat was also the maximum price and, therefore, the farmers were not permitted to collect a premium on the guarantee.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Barnes had in view the rights of the consumers and as a grain dealer and exporter he is expected to be particularly merciful to the public in whose interests he assists in manipulating the markets. It may be that Mr. Barnes did not collect a dollar a year, but nobody will doubt that he earned it. As a member of the assistant United States Government, Mr. Barnes has already established his right to be regarded as a potent factor. As president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, his usefulness will be immensely augmented. Both the Chamber and the assistant government are entitled to congratulations.

Although I place Mr. Alfred Pembroke Thom third in the list of those who have qualified for membership in the inner circles of the assistant government, I by no means give him third place in actual achievement. That would be a denial of the facts of history and a contradiction of his record. Mr. Stayton is a big man and Mr. Barnes may be of equal size, but the redoubtable counsel for the

Association of Railway Executives could dandle both of them on one knee and not feel in any sense inconvenienced by their combined weight. Mr. Thom has been instrumental in collecting hundreds of millions of dollars in deficits for the railway companies. But this illustrious lawyer would very rightly spurn the insinuation that he was a mere deficit collector. The fact, however, is that through the exercise of his immense genius he has succeeded in inducing the American Congress to make such provision as would assure weak or mismanaged railways against the financial consequences of their own faulty methods.

Naturally, and very properly, the controlling motive of Mr. Thom in all his activities has been the protection of widows and orphans who own in the aggregate enormous volumes of railway stocks and bonds. These honest citizens are not responsible for the deluging of railway values with water and other foreign substances. They are not to blame for mismanagement, for stock gambling, for manipulation and for the deliberate wreckage of great transportation systems. So when the railways go in the hole the Government would pull them out, if for no other reason than to protect the innocent purchasers of their securities.

One of the monumental achievements of this distinguished philanthropist was the adoption by Congress of the Cummins-Esch bill. Of course, he had the valuable assistance of the railway executives and the international bankers who found markets for stocks and bonds, or loaned money on them; but

to his genius of argument and direction can certainly be ascribed the fact that the widows and orphans protected by him were not obilged to pay an unheard-of assessment on their stocks. Mr. Thom admits this to be a fact, and I certainly would not for a moment doubt his word.

Mr. Thom is a young man. He is only sixty. I say "young" advisedly because he is at the zenith of his mental powers. He is a Virginian by birth, a Democrat in politics and socially an admirable gentleman.

As an example of the peculiar and valuable talent Mr. Thom has for getting things done. I might mention the fact that a right-of-way was found for the Winslow bill anticipating the time when partial payments might be made to the railways by the Treasury under the guarantee measure. This bill allowed the payments to be made many months in advance of the time set in the original law. To do this it was necessary to sidetrack the Packer Control bill and other legislation deemed to be of vast importance. But Mr. Thom was representing the widows and orphans and, of course, had first call upon the consideration of Congress.

In working so harmoniously with Congressman Winslow of Massachusetts, who ordinarily regards a non-Republican as politically anathema marinatha, Mr. Thom showed marvelous self-possession, coupled with ability to do teamwork so valuable to those who had been fortunate enough to acquire his services. If he got a dollar a year dur-

ing the war nobody should begrudge it to him for he surely earned it and if the Government didn't discharge its obligation to him the widows and orphans should assume the debt of honor.

Advertising that it represents manufacturing concerns with total resources of seven billion dollars, the National Association of Manufacturers has installed itself in Washington in a comparatively modest and unobstrusive way. As the organization interlocks with the Association of Railway Executives and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, it is not necessary for it to have a temple of its own. It has access to the rooms and, what is more valuable, the advice of the railway executives and the Chamber of Commerce, so what more does it need for itself than limited space in an office building?

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States, a friend of mine in a moment of absent mindedness suggested might change its title to read "The National Association of Lobbyists," and under that generic title comprehend the entire assistant government. It is unlikely, however, that the National Association of Manufacturers will merge or surrender its identity. It has been denied that organized labor baiting is among the chief activities of this association, though the *New York World* a few years ago made the charge.

Be that as it may, James A. Emery, a Washington lawyer of high attainment and equally high repute, maintains that it is an organization that has no other purpose in view than to obtain a square

deal for those who do the nation's manufacturing. If Mr. Emery is not a member of the assistant government, those directing that institution have most certainly failed to avail themsleves of a piece of first-class timber.

It can be said of this eminent lawyer that nobody ever had reason to doubt his word and no citizen ever had received a promise from him which was not religiously and scrupulously carried out. But it is complained and probably with a degree of justice that Mr. Emery does not pledge his word to any but those with whom he enjoys confidential and maybe serviceable relations. Neither is he prodigal with his promises. He guards these as a miser does his hoard of gold. This super-caution is a very valuable asset to the assistant government and it is not to be supposed that it has not already been availed of.

Fuel is essential to the life of industry and coal is the most important item under such a heading. The coal operatives insist that while their product is black, the hearts of those directing the industry are of an angelic whiteness. They have seats in the assistant government, and in justice to them it might be said they are making the very best use of them. It is their function to make the Congress agree with them that collection of one hundred and fity or two hundred per cent on dividends is not an excessive imposition on the users of coal. They also are aggrieved when some grouchy member of Congress, or some comparatively free newspaper, makes the assertion that people get robbed when

they pay sixteen dollars a ton for fuel that costs about three dollars to produce.

One of the most accomplished in this line of reasoning is George H. Cushing, managing director of the Wholesale Coal Dealers' Association. During the life of the Sixty-sixth Congress an effort was made to enact a bill which would have the effect of informing the public just how much they were paying for their coal in excess of the cost of production. Mr. Cushing thought this was an invasion of the rights of business. The millions of persons who use coal were entitled to no consideration, but the few operators and dealers were in every way entitled to such protection as the Government could extend.

Mr. Cushing didn't say that it was the duty of the Government to conceal facts, but his line of reasoning left no doubt that he entertained such a doctrine. He did yeoman service for his chiefs when he brought so many witnesses to Washington as to make it impossible to get through the hearing during the life of the existing Congress. It is too much to say that Mr. Cushing by his own prowess, eloquence and ingenuity defeated for the time any attempt to enact corrective legislation, but his contribution to the happy result for the coal barons was such as to win for him many deserved encomiums. This genius said there were four trillion tons of coal in the bowels of the American earth between the Missouri River and the Atlantic Ocean, and he naively invited those who were not

satisfied with the treatment they received from the barons to dig some on their own account.

He almost succeeded in convincing some members of the Manufactures Committee of the Senate that it was all right to charge the War Department from three to four dollars a ton more than was collected from the Navy for the same kind and quality of coal. Mr. Cushing used to be a newspaper man, but evidently decided that there were higher rewards in coal than in printer's ink.

Mr. Cushing had a very able lieutenant in the person of J. D. A. Morrow, a youthful member of the assistant government, who won his spurs early in his official life. Mr. Morrow has an unpretentious personality and to meet him you would not be impressed with the thought that he represented an industry in which hundreds of millions are invested. He is congenial, affable and modest, always approachable, but keen witted and sparing of words which might have a meaning or out of which an embarrassing significance might be twisted. So he prefers in talk with ordinary visitors a discussion of golf to politics and would be quite at home in baseball, but seriously confused when somebody from the outer ring tries to make his own mission the theme of conversation. He can be eloquent when he wants to be and witty when the occasion and the company calls for it. He is president of the National Coal Dealers' Association, and well qualified to sit with Mr. Cushing as an honored member of the assistant government.

Mr. Draper, a young man who blushes even

while anticipating the delivery to him of a compliment, is one of the chief employees of the Institute of American Meat Packers. This is an organization which talks in billions. When the Packer Control bill failed to pass the Sixty-sixth Congress, Mr. Draper admitted that the efficiency displayed by his organization was responsible for its untimely demise.

No one has ever accused the packers of inefficiency either in the packing business or looking after packers' interests in Washington. Their efficiency in their industrial activity is not exceeded by the efficiency with which their interests are looked after in every channel of governmental activity. Modest as is Norman Draper, the result of his stewardship in Washington, justifies the faith of the meat curing barons in his ability and assigning him a place among the real big guns of the assistant government.

During and since the war the lumbermen of the country have been accused of profiteering to an outrageous extent. In response to this charge they declared that the very flower of the business was in Washington at a dollar-a-year per man helping the Government fight and win the war, while the rank and file were in France or in army camps, many of them doing some actual fighting. In view of such patriotism how could any person have the crust to say these gentlemen were profiteering? Indeed, nobody ought to believe such a charge, even if the evidence to be presented in court at some future time should fully establish their guilt.

So that they may be fully protected the men engaged in the lumber business saw to it that they would have efficient representation in the assistant United States Government. So they selected Mr. Willis Compton and Mr. John H. Kirby to head the lobby. They took offices in Washington and proceeded to try to convince the country that the many and huge fortunes made by men in their calling, almost overnight were acquired in a manner that even the Angel Gabriel would approve. Mr. Compton looked after the interests of the Hardwood Lumberman's Association, while Mr. Kirby saw that the Southern pine men were not allowed to suffer through ill-considered legislation or unhappy bureaucratic regulations or restrictions. These organizations hold membership in the National Association of Manufacturers and are also represented in the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. It is not clearly established that either Mr. Kirby or Mr. Compton were on the Federal payroll to the extent of a dollar a year each. But if not the next deficiency appropriation bill should include two dollars to reimburse them for their arduous services.

In passing, something should be said about canners. The cannery business is a useful industry, but some engaged in it proved resentful of efforts by the Federal Government to ascertain the exact character of what they put into hermetically sealed tin cans. Moreover, it had been charged that certain gentlemen had imposed on the Quartermaster's Department during the war and some of the

canned stuff was not as wholesome as it ought to be. Our Government having in mind the embalmed-beef scandal of the Spanish-American War was careful to see that nothing of the kind would occur during the world conflict. Anwway, the canners have formed what is known as the National Canners' Association. This organization in Washington is directed by R. T. Strasbaugh, who has equipped his department with publicity machinery and all other agencies necessary for the conduct of an effective propaganda in and out of Congress.

Some Congressmen have churlishly stated that with so many members of the assistant government constantly demanding their ear they are unable to give proper attention to the duties for which they have been elected. They say the function of a Congressman is to make laws, and to try to make such laws as the sentiment of their constituents might be expected to approve. The answer by the assistant government to this plea is that the Congressmen need instruction and it is the patriotic duty of the assistant government to impart it.

Nobody has yet taken a complete census of the men and women associated with the assistant government, but it is said that if all connected with this distinctively American institution were suddenly to withdraw from Washington a serious slump in the city's population would result. Real estate values would be adversely affected and many empty apartments would be at the disposal of those who now say they are unable to find desirable places in which to live. Hotels would experience

a sudden lapse into adversity and taxicab drivers would suffer a decided loss in fares.

If a statesman is in doubt on any matter of public policy he does not have to consult the folks back home. All that he is required to do is to get into touch with a member of the assistant government. If he does this he can instantly be straightened out and he has the added advantage of saving a considerable sum in telegraph or telephone tolls.

Moreover, the assistant government is always available to a Congressman. Some members of the assistant government have extension receivers at their bedsides so that they can be reached at all hours, night and day. Some even have radio equipment in their rooms and offices, and a Congressman recently complained that somebody associated with the assistant government had surreptitiously installed a dictaphone in his office. The advantage of this is that it is not necessary for a statesman to tell his story more than once. The dictaphone will repeat it as often as may be desired.

There is something pathetically touching about the readiness of the assistant government to sacrifice time and expend energy for the benefit of United States Senators and Congressmen whom they deem to be insufficiently informed. Among the organizations not already mentioned which have representatives in Washington are the following:

Manufacturing Chemists' Association of America.

Council of American Cotton Manufacturers.

Southern Industrial Education Society.

Founders' Association.

Highway Industries Association.

American Automobile Chamber of Commerce.

National Bureau of Wholesale Lumber Distributors.

American Mining Congress.

American Realty Exchange.

National Merchant Marine Association.

League of Commission Merchants of the United States.

National Oil Bureau.

National Petroleum Association.

American Patent Law Association.

National Committee on Gas and Electric Service.

National Committee on Public Utilities.

National Association for Protection of American Rights in Mexico.

National Committee to Secure Rank for Army Nurses.

National Negro Business League.

National Voters' League.

National Forestry Association.

National Patriotic Press.

League for Preservation of American Independence.

National Association of Colored Races.

National Committee of Armenian and Syrian Relief.

National Federation of Federal Employees.

National Women's Trade Union League.

And many other organizations.

Of course, it is improper for a foreign diplomat to attempt to influence American legislative or executive action, but a way has been found to accomplish this. Legislative committees have been created under the names of educational bureaus or such like. These have no definite or tangible connection with any accredited diplomat, nevertheless, the country which the diplomat represents is often the beneficiary of their activities.

CHAPTER VII

Washington, City of Promises

ROME is called "The Eternal City." Washington has earned its title to the "City of Promises." You can obtain any kind of a promise you want here providing you come with backing from somebody who may be, or thinks he is, important. It is no exaggeration to say that every job at the disposal of the Government has been promised directly or indirectly, or by implication, to at least one hundred persons.

Naturally, those charged with the responsibility of actually employing or assigning to duty the applicant for office do not directly make promiscuous promises of departmental or presidential favor. But the applicant for a job is bound to be told by somebody that "its a cinch" or "it can be put across," or "I will see that the old man hands it to you." Not only can you obtain a promise of a job, but if you want anything done for any of your friends, you can get a promise that it will be done.

There is no such thing in Washington as a refusal. Nobody would be coarse enough to hurt the feelings of a seeker after favors by telling him that he "hadn't a ghost of a show and had better go home." This might be honest and would bring to a speedy termination the suspensive agony of the applicant, but it wouldn't be diplomatic; and diplomacy must never be permitted to yield to mere

honesty. The latter is commonplace. Almost anyone can be honest, but only an extraordinary individual can be a diplomatist.

I heard of a Congressman who told an applicant for a position that there was no hope for him and he had better go home, hang out his shingle and practice his profession. The gentleman accepted his advice and when he went home announced himself as a candidate for Congress to succeed the statesman who had been so frank with him. And he got elected. So it is perilous to be candid with office seekers.

I don't know how many men have been promised posts on the Federal Reserve Board, the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Farm Loan Board and other bodies. It is fair to say that these promises have not been made by the President or anybody directly authorized to speak for him. But they have been made by so-called statesmen, or individuals influential in states or cities, who believe themselves to be equally influential at the White House.

"Oh, yes, you want to go in the Federal Reserve Board. I'll see Senator Blank, who is close to the White House, and I feel certain that he will put it over. Leave it to me."

This is the form in which such assurances by those who believe themselves to be statesmen, are given to the victims of unauthorized promises. It is painful, almost heartbreaking to witness the simple and childlike trust of really big men, in the profuse promises made every hour in the day in

Washington. Put not your trust in Princes, is a warning that few heed. At least they never seem to doubt the word of the self-crowned princes of Federal patronage and they stay in Washington day after day, week after week and sometimes during most of the entire period of an administration, hoping against hope that a crumb will fall from the pie counter into their receptive laps.

Some hotels in Washington would go into bankruptcy, or at least they would be compelled to heavily retrench, were it not for the patronage of expectant office seekers. Before the inauguration of President Harding hundreds of these gentlemen obtained reservations in hotels or boarding houses, journeyed to Washington and a very large percentage of them have been at the National Capital ever since, their aspirations still unsatisfied, Still they are hoping on.

They ought to know that all offices of any importance have long since been filled, and there is not even available a junior clerkship in any subordinate division of a departmental bureau. But this does not daunt them. They continue to pay heavy hotel expenses, many of them sending home for money and telling their friends in their begging letters that "the old man" is soon going to "take care of them."

There is no figure in the country more pathetic than he who day after day metaphorically sits on the White House steps hoping that George Christian will emerge from the executive office with a commission in his hand authorizing the expectant

one to take his place in the Government service. The mind of such a man becomes stagnant, his self-respect suffers impairment and his habit of depending upon the Public Treasury for support destroys his own confidence in his own powers of initiative. He is a pariah hanging upon the outskirts of official Washington and sustained only by promises which continue in the face of hopelessness, to be prolific.

I know one man who stayed in Washington for more than a year at an expense of fifteen dollars a day and the zenith of his ambition was a four-thousand-dollar a year post under the Department of Justice. Many others who would be satisfied with two thousand dollars a year and would not scorn a position with a hundred dollars a month attached to it, walk the streets of Washington day after day, haunting Congressmen, Senators and Cabinet Officers in search of the means of satisfying their cravings to serve the Government. Some of these have L. L. D. and other letters indicative of the fact that they have attained distinction in the scholastic world, engraved on their cards. A lady connected with the legal division of the Department of the Interior recently wrote a letter to me from which I cull the following:

"I have the degree of L. L. D. and Master of Arts; I am a member of the Bar of the District of Columbia and authorized to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States, but in my present position I receive the princely salary of $100 a month plus a promise of $240 bonus at the end of the year." My answer to a statement of this

kind is that the victim should be practicing law on her own account.

The craze for office holding is one of the most distressing features of a large section of our citizenship. These citizens want to help the Government, they say. But they only succeed in embarrassing it. If frank dealing were to be substituted for a plethora of unauthorized promises many of the miserable men and women who spend so much of their time in idle search for unremunerative employment in Washington might attach themselves to some really valuable enterprise. One man complained to me just before he was about to go home after a long and futile attempt to obtain a Federal job, that he had been chloroformed by promises.

This explains why the office seeker in Washington is invariably so good natured. Hope deferred never makes his heart sick. He is under the influence of a powerful anesthetic, and the effect seldom wears off until he is ready to return home. Living in a fool's paradise of flimsy promises, the man who wants to serve the Government becomes a charming temporary addition to Washington life. At home he may have been a grouch. He may have been impatient, or glum. But here he is all smiles and sunshine. I am not depreciating Government service. It is honorable and necessary. Such service should be adequately compensated, but there is no reason for tolerating a spoils system which makes drones of thousands of citizens who would otherwise be workers.

CHAPTER VIII

"Big Stick" Gets Results

IN Washington things are done by the use of one or more of a trinity of influences; the club, the merit in the question submitted and the trade. Questions of right or wrong may have their place as cumulative determining factors, but the citizen who depends solely on the righteousness of his cause will very often be roughly disillusioned. Not that men in Congress are bad or venal. They are simply human and are working in a great mill whose grist is politics rather than morals.

The average statesman wants to do right, but he desires to serve another and still another term. He is hardly elected before he begins to plan for another two years at the national legislative wheel. He is in a great game, the rules of which were written long, long before he had any idea of coming to Washington. Sometimes the legislative tyro comes with exalted ideas of the honor that has been conferred upon him and with his breast swelling with pride. He has made up his mind to do something magnificent, something picturesque, something that will never fade from the mind of men and will constitute one of the most striking events in all the history of his own country. Warm of heart, pure of mind, thrilling with a desire to achieve, he rushes into the immense legislative mill only to find that he is not even the tiniest belt on the smallest

wheel in the whole plant. Then after disillusionment, comes resignation to the inevitable and he settles down to the grind and plays the game according to the political Hoyle.

As the reader will understand, the club is a most important weapon in Washington and it is often and unsparingly used. Many standpat Congressmen and Senators will perform a progressive or even a radical service when they find that those desiring it have in both hands a club with which they can beat out their political brains.

The Apostle Paul said that some persons in Rome were preaching the gospel for the malicious purpose of adding to his troubles. Nevertheless, he rejoiced because the story of the Cross had been more extensively told. So when a farmer is able to induce a hostile statesman to show symptoms of enthusiasm for progressive agricultural legislation he may rejoice because the club he wields is effective. But as often shown, Uncle Reuben need not keep in office a man who votes right because he is clubbed into doing so when he can obtain the services of a citizen who will vote correctly because he is convinced that any other course would be an act of treachery to the people.

It is not necessary to be personal here. The reader, if he has followed the course of events, will be able to identify statesmen who have been retired from public life by farmers in spite of the fact that they had voted consistently for farmer measures. On their face these reverses appeared to be unmerited but generally speaking there were

good and sufficient reasons for the adverse popular verdicts. Farmers don't like to use clubs, but when necessary they will not hesitate to wield them.

Many Congressmen would greatly appreciate that freedom of action which would enable them to vote only on the merits of a bill. They detest the necessity, as often happens, of compromising with their convictions in order to get anything for their constituents. It has often occurred that the political life of a Member of Congress depended almost entirely on his ability to get a post office or some other Federal building in some city in his district. The voters in that particular city may hold the balance of power in the district and may be able to relegate him to private life or continue him in public service just as the wish or the whim would strike them.

The citizens of another community may want a harbor improved or a river dredged or a Federal prisoner pardoned. Then the question of merit is subordinated to the question of how these Congressmen may save their political hides. Then the traders get busy. Compromises are agreed to. And very often bills of merit are allowed to stay in the pigeonhole while measures of little value, except to one person or a very limited number are passed, engrossed and sent to the White House for approval. Old soldiers have been compelled to wait ten, fifteen and even twenty and thirty years for pensions which were clearly their due. They had merit, but they had neither a club nor the influence at Washington which would consummate

a satisfactory trade. They had been forgotten. Congressmen are not heartless, but the mill they operate is. It is without soul.

On the whole, I think the club is the more effective of the three weapons and the farmers should not hesitate to use it when occasion requires. The favorite club in the hands of high and heavy finance is its ability to make available or unavailable necessary campaign contributions. This is a menacing and even a crushing weapon. When it is trotted out from the armory it causes a stampede and sometimes a rout. The farmers haven't any such club, but they have votes, which after all present a most effective foil for the financial weapon.

But a club in a single hand, unsupported by an organization, would be useless. Electricity is only powerful when organized into volts. Then it may rive the solid oak or split into fragments the costliest and most substantial buildings. A club to be effective must be made of the right materials. If you would compel obedience to your will you must first be sure that your cause is just. Assured of that fact, the club may be used without a disquieting feeling that an offense against conscience has been perpetrated.

Uncle Reuben, use your club, but let it represent the organized will of the farmers founded upon what the conscience of our country will approve.

CHAPTER IX

Incidents Political and Otherwise

UNSELFISH statesmanship is a very rare and extremely valuable attribute. We have been told of men who would rather give their bodies to the flames than allow their minds to assent to that which is against the interests of their country.

Represenative Andrew J. Volstead, of Minnesota, who was badly beaten in the recent elections, frankly admitted to some of my friends and myself that he was not willing to be counted among those who would do a great public service without incidentally collecting and keeping some advantage for himself. When the Capper-Hersman bill was before the Judiciary Committee, in company with others, I called on Mr. Volstead, who was the chairman, and urged him to make some speed with the measure.

As all informed persons know, bills giving farmers the right to cooperatively market their products and many of the measures changing laws relating to agriculture are referred to the Judiciary Committee. The bill I refer to was drawn by representatives of the National Board of Farm Organizations and the National Farmers' Union. At my suggestion, Senator Capper, a Republican, and Congressman Hersman, of California, a Democrat, presented it formally at the same time in their re-

spective Houses. The farmers did not recognize the right of any party or group to treat this as a partisan political measure. Certainly those responsible for it originally had not thought of politics in connection with it. Their only purpose was to obtain legislation which would give to the farmers a larger measure of economic freedom.

"Mr. Volstead," I said to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, "why can't we get some action on our cooperative marketing bill?" He turned to me and said quite emphatically:

"I see the name of a Democratic Congressman is attached to this bill as one of the authors and I am not going to let it pass."

"Suppose we were to take his name off and substitute yours, would you then let it pass?" I asked him.

"Yes, if you will place my name where Hersman's is I will see that the bill is reported out and passed," Mr. Volstead replied, evidently seeing nothing extraordinary in such a suggestion. At that very time farmers in various parts of the country were either arrested or threatened with arrest because they dared to meet together and propose means through which they could obtain at least the cost of production. But we wanted action so it was a matter of indifference to us whether the bill had a Republican or Democratic label on it. So to accelerate its adoption we consented to allow Mr. Volstead to become, for public consumption, one of its authors. The bill then passed. The

reader will observe that he is now "Former Congressman Volstead."

It may not be exactly chivalric to make a political corpse the subject of animadversion, but the reader is entitled to facts of Congressional history which do not always find their way into the authorized record of proceedings in Washington. During the latter days of the Sixty-sixth Congress, the House and Senate had each passed a Packer Control bill. There were fundamental differences between the two bills, but it was learned that these could be ironed out in a very little while and the steering committee of the House was petitioned by more than one hundred and fifty Representatives to allow the matter to come to the floor where, after a debate of two hours, a final vote could be reached.

The House was apparently ready to dispose of the matter in very short order, but the steering committee of which Mr. Mondell was the head, steadfastly declined to provide the necessary parliamentary right of way. It was pleaded that the time of Congress was so short that it would not be possible to consider any but supply bills. Phil Campbell was chairman of the Rules Committee. He wanted to report a rule for debate, but stated that he could not take action disagreeable to the Steering Commitee and even if he did Mr. Mondell and the speaker might easily side track the proposed rule.

One Saturday afternoon early in February a committee representing every National Farm Organization maintaining offices in Washington called

on the floor leader. In addition to the farmer representatives there were spokesmen from the Consumers' Leagues, the American Federation of Labor and the Brotherhoods. Thus the consumers and producers joined hands in the campaign. Mr. Mondell was impatient and even irascible. He listened with very bad grace to the appeals of members of the committee. He declared that no time could be given to the discussion of the packer bill because it had all been allotted.

"But Mr. Mondell," he was asked, "this bill has been before the House for a number of years and we have an overwhelming majority for it only awaiting an opportunity to vote. Can't you give your colleagues this opportunity?"

"You gave eight hours to the consideration of a local improvement bill involving a total expenditure of slightly less than eight million dollars. Why can you not give at least two hours to the consideration of a measure in which all persons, consumers and producers alike are interested?" a member of the delegation asked Mr. Mondell.

"What if this bill has been before Congress a number of years. The oil leasing bill was twelve years getting through Congress," Mr. Mondell told his visitors. His manner was such as to indicate his belief in very slow movements along the road to packer control.

"Mr. Mondell," a member of the delegation said to him, "you say that you have not the power to force to the floor this proposed legislation. If that is so, then the information I have gained through

a long study and at close range, of the parliamentary system prevailing here has been all wrong and I must begin over again. It has always been my understanding that a steering committee can steer a bill in any direction it likes. Now, can you not give us the two hours we require to dispose of this legislation?"

The floor leader made no immediate reply, but soon dismissed the delegation with the emphatic assurance that nothing could be done. Shortly after Congress assembled in extraordinary session in 1921 Mr. Mondell announced his candidacy for the seat in the United States Senate held by Mr. Kendrick. Then he became an ardent champion of packer control legislation. The bill which he so effectually blocked in the Sixty-sixth Congress was very speedily given a right of way in the Sixty-seventh Congress. He found that the Steering Committee really had the power to steer a bill to the floor or into the waste-paper basket just as political exigency might suggest. Mr. Mondell notified the cattle raisers of his State that he was their friend. Whether they accepted at par his own appraisal of himself is not clear, but the indisputable fact is that the voters have decided to make of him an ex-Congressman.

David Franklin Houston, who served as Secretary of Agriculture, and then as Secretary of the Treasury, and rode the farmers for eight years, had one qualification which he regarded as of higher value than any talent that a Cabinet officer could bring to the aid of his associates. He had poise.

He told his associates that this quality was indispensable to a public servant and all should assiduously cultivate it. So if poise was not at a premium in Congress, or at the White House, it certainly was placed on a high pedestal in the office of Secretary Houston. And when Mr. Houston left that department to assume the important and complex duties of Secretary of the Treasury he carried the pedestal with him. Wherever he went there was poise. Deportment was more essential to the direction of a great governmental department than was knowledge of the duties he had been selected to perform.

Mr. Houston has been charged with inconsistency. This is an injustice, and I hasten to repel it. Supplementing my own knowledge of the former Secretary, I have testimony from a number of reputable citizens to the fact that he pursued a consistent course. He never allowed any such weakness as a liberated human emotion to disturb the serenity of his countenance, and I am informed he warned those associated with him to cultivate poise to the limit.

In the dark days of 1920 when the governor of the Federal Reserve Board and Mr. Houston decided upon a policy which would force down the price of farm products to such a level as to destroy both substance and hope, Mr. Houston never lost his poise. By his policy the homes of farmers by the thousands were wrested from them. During all the tortures inflicted on agriculture he never

forgot, no matter what else was lost, to take care that there should be no sacrifice of poise.

It sometimes happens, however, that the thing we depend upon to rescue us from peril and save us from well-deserved censure, proves to be a rope of sand. Mr. Houston chose to put his trust in poise. And poise, which promised to cover every defect in his administration, proved at last only to be a reflector of his official failures.

During the period of enforced defaltion precipitated by the policy of Mr. Houston and his associate, Governor Harding, of the Federal Reserve Board, the then Secretary of the Treasury trusted to poise to save him from exposure. But here poise failed him. It was a shameful trick to play on that distinguished personage, but the man who substitutes poise for more enduring qualities should not complain if he becomes the victim of his own self-deception. Poise had carried the Secretary over many a sheer and dangerous ravine, but when needed to save his official reputation it threw up both hands and confessed that it was unequal to the mighty task. The colossal crime of 1920 climaxed more than seven years of inefficiency and blundering.

When David Franklin Houston was offered the post of Secretary of Agriculture I am not aware that he had a known enemy among the farmers of the United States. When he surrendered the portfolio of Secretary of the Treasury, I do not know of a single friend he had among them. But he still

had poise and he took poise with him into retirement.

While the part of wisdom and good judgment causes Uncle Reuben critically to analyze the proposed cooperation of high-minded people in other walks of life and so often finds not only nothing helpful, but lurking dangers in the proposals, he has also to sift carefully even among his own at times to forestall activities in the name of the farmer which mean conflicts with agriculture's best interests. These proposals and activities may be in all good faith, but the danger lurks just the same.

As an example of this I cite the very remarkable activities of Brother R. D. Bowen, of Paris, Texas, and New Orleans, Louisiana, whom some one has said to be endowed with a triangular political personality.

At all events, this gentleman, who as a cooperator of ordinarily hostile elements, proved in years gone by to be an artist of preeminent attainment. Brother Bowen used to be a member of a local Farmers' Union, but having regard for his health and realizing that he was spending too much of his artistic self in the cause, D. A. Lyday, who was president of the Texas organization, suggested that he be invited to retire and then ordered that his local should effect his retirement. Mr. Lyday thought that Brother Bowen was giving the Farmers' Union too much help. Brother Lyday, like the writer, always believed that those engaged in a movement to help the farmers should march together in solid phalanx, and he discouraged any

effort by individuals to detach themselves from the main column and go against the enemy single handed.

It was the evident determination of Brother Bowen to either follow afar off or get too much in the lead that made things embarrassing for those of us who desired to walk abreast of each other. Brother Bowen had been warned a number of times to moderate his pace and walk in step with the ordinary mortals associated with the organization. But his radical legs getting the best of his conservative body he was continually carried far, far to the front. Occasionally the conservative body would gain an ascendency over the radical lower limbs, but this ascendency would be short lived.

Brother Bowen might have been an actor in speaking drama or maybe would have gone into the movies were it not for the fact that in early manhood he perhaps had discovered that his mission was to associate the farmers, the railways and all sorts of incongruous interests together for common action. To make the Farmers' Union charitably and benevolently serve the railways and even become amicable in its relations with the cotton gamblers seems to have been among the tasks which Brother Bowen set for himself. Naturally a man like Brother Bowen was impelled to these tasks by the very highest of motives and he brought to the particular service in which he was engaged a genius that not even Alfred Thom was able to display. In the art of making fundamentally hostile interests serve each other, Brother Bowen showed that

he was the peer of any man in the United States.

Unfortunately, even the most accomplished and the most saintly of men make mistakes. This is due to the limitations of our flesh-bound spirits. It would be unfair to the reader to say that Brother Bowen showed perfection of judgment or exhibited infallibility in his conduct. For instance, while trying with all his human might to serve the Farmers' Union he caused that organization to give aid and comfort to the enemies of the farmers. This was perhaps due to some technical error in the phraseology of resolutions which in his innocence he induced unsuspecting local organizations to adopt. Some of the resolutions which Brother Bowen caused his associates in the Farmers' Union to father, proved, on examination, to be concessions to cotton gamblers and others who have never been known to be friendly to tillers of the soil, but these disastrous miscarriages were, as has been said, probably the results of faulty construction of such documents. Anyhow, curiously enough, the interests which have opposed agricultural cooperation and agricultural prosperity, generally proved to be the beneficiaries of Brother Bowen's activities. The farmers rarely did profit by his well-meant services.

That he was in sympathy with Uncle Reuben is poved in sundry and divers ways. He showed his sympathy on some occasions by attending Farmers' Union Conventions dressed in frayed and patched clothing of ancient style and make. In this humble garb he would parade before apparently

more opulent farmers and the impression would go forth that he had taken a perpetual vow of poverty. After the convention, if Brother Bowen could be seen at a banquet of bankers or cotton gamblers, the metamorphosis would prove to be overpowering if not captivating. But it was right here that the genius of Brother Bowen would shine with a splendor all its own. What would be his purpose of associating with the high and mighty if it were not to spy out the land on behalf of the farmer and make plans to defeat the machinations of the enemy in his own stronghold? Woe is man. Would that we could escape the ills inseparable from humanity. Brother Bowen could not help making some mistakes and committing some errors of judgment. He could not explain to the satisfaction of his fellow toilers these incursions into the domains of the rich and powerful and it was suspected that he carried some of his imperfectly drawn resolutions with him.

Elsewhere in this book we have called attention to the somewhat lucrative business of buying and selling resolutions. Brother Bowen prepared so many resolutions and accounted finally for so few that some frivolous souls suggested that possibly he found a market for them. In all society we find persons who are ready to whisper away a reputation built on years of effort. And Brother Bowen had certainly built a reputation. It is one that all the old timers in the Farmers' Union remember very distinctly. Remember, it can not either be

blasted or whispered away. This tribute is ungrudgingly given, but as we have already said, the great agrarian shared with his fellowmen the imperfections incident to humanity.

I knew something of Brother Bowen's reputation. It was this knowledge, acquired through years of study of his character and contact with the results of his activities that caused me to travel eighteen hundred miles in order personally to inform him that I was compelled to decline his help for the future. It is not to be supposed that I was unappreciative of what he had done. I remember one very important activity which added greatly to the reputation which he had so assiduously built for himself. A bill was introduced in the Georgia Senate concerning gambling on the cotton exchanges. Of course it was supposed that so good a patriot as Brother Bowen was there endeavoring to strengthen the law against cotton gambling which had a number of years before been passed by the Georgia legislature. So it was unanimously accepted by the Senate.

One day I was at the Kimball House in Atlanta when I caught a fleeting glimpse of Brother Bowen. The thought flashed through my mind then and there that the gentleman was engaged in some patriotic undertaking and I determined to find out just what he was doing. I tried to speak to him, but so intense was his desire to complete the task that he set for himself that he rushed in another direction, apparently resolved to make the best use

of his time. So I was denied the joy of a conversation with him.

I then rushed breathlessly to the Capitol, feeling that if I was to be of any real assistance to Brother Bowen I must act with the utmost speed. When I reached the lower chamber of the legislature I encountered Representative Boykin.

"The man's in town who can put it over on the whole Georgia legisature," I told Boykin. Without another word we stepped to the Senate chamber and got into immediate conference with Senator Jim Mills, who, to our dismay, informed us that since Brother Bowen had been in town, already the Senate was so well impressed that there was not a single vote against the bill.

A little investigation disclosed that Brother Bowen had unwittingly imposed on himself. The Farmers' Union representatives in the Georgia House of Representatives minutely examined the bill and found a joker of enormous dimensions in it. Not only was it tremendous of size, but it was frightful of mien, for if enacted this bill virtually would have repealed the anti-gambling laws of that State. It was certainly very fortunate that the error of Brother Bowen was detected in time, otherwise he would have proved himself to be the unwilling tool of the men who rob both the consumers and producers of cotton.

This was one of the incidents in the career of this great man that determined me to go to his home and tell him with friendly frankness that it would

not be well for him to attempt to give any further assistance to the farmers. There were other little errors of judgment on the part of Brother Bowen which, had we space would be recorded here, but suffice it to say that nearly everything he attempted to do for the betterment of Uncle Reuben, seemed by some decree of fate to be twisted to the advantage of the enemies of the farmers. It is sad to think that so able a man should perpetrate blunders so expensive and so appalling. But in some respects this humble Texas citizen was the king of lobbyists and the greatest of all amalgamators of human beings.

Other acts of omission and commission by Brother Bowen, behold they are written in the records of the Texas Railway Commission. And any person, organization or institution requiring the services of a great cooperator should apply to Senator-elect Earl B. Mayfield or D. E. Lyday, both of the Lone Star State, and we are fully assured they will know how to recommend Brother Bowen of Paris, Texas, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Senator Mayfield was chairman of the Texas Railway Commission when Brother Bowen was invited to explain certain little matters in connection with his relations with certain big carrying concerns which are engaged both in interstate and intrastate transportation. Brother Bowen was cruelly cross-examined and Mr. Mayfield literally forced from this long-suffering public servant admissions that are said to be somewhat damaging. In seeking information from the new Lone Star

Senator in relation to the reputation of Brother Bowen we would advise the applicant to request that a copy of the volume containing the examination of the distinguished gentleman accompany the reply. A perusal of this will make it unnecessary to seek information elsewhere.

CHAPTER X

The Chamber of Commerce in Politics

THE right of commerce to organize is fundamental. It can not be properly questioned. The right of labor, of finance and of agriculture to do the same thing has been established by law and no right-minded person will question it. Each has a right to protect itself against the encroachments of men and interests which imperil or threaten the stability of the Nation or the stability of the industry in which each is engaged. But none has a right to attempt to acquire by force, by subtlety, by camouflage or by any other means a virtual proprietorship of the Government of the United States. Self-preservation is a law of nature which nobody has attempted to controvert and the right to defend one's self and one's property against the assassin or the pillager is as sacred as the moral law.

Desiring nothing more than a square deal and unwilling to take anything less, the farmers, organized and prepared for action, came to Washington. They came not to take over the Government, but rather to help release it from the talons of interests which were making use of it for purposes which were not altogether altruistic. Uncle Reuben would have preferred to stay at home and follow the plow or the harvester, but he saw that if he took no more than a long-distance interest in

what was progressing in Washington it soon would happen that as a factor in this Government he would cease to be of any influence or value.

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States had intrenched itself. As the representative of those who provide campaign funds it was received with open arms. There is nothing fundamentally wrong or even objectionable about a chamber of commerce. It was brought into existence by eminently respectable men who believed that citizens engaged in selling needed supplies to the people should establish a better understanding among themselves. The idea originally behind the movement was a very commendable one. Some forward looking men decided that business need not be a cutthroat institution, breeding hatred and dissension in the community, keeping excellent men who otherwise should be friends, in opposite and hostile camps and making community life in many cases irksome and sometimes intolerable. So they resolved to create chambers of commerce or commercial clubs where business men who were competitors could meet as friends and discuss matters of general interest to their communities.

With the creation of these institutions was inaugurated a new and more agreeable community business life. Hitherto business men would pass each other on the street silently and sullenly. But soon through the creation of their commercial clubs and chambers of commerce they would be found chatting amiably together over the luncheon table. Questions of better schools, better lighting, better

housing and better highways would occupy their thoughts and these would be discussed.

Instead of fighting each other they would attack the common enemy of inefficiency, and other evils and often this coming together and meeting on a common platform would result in better material, moral and spiritual conditions for their towns. I am a staunch friend of the Chamber of Commerce, when it remains in the sphere to which it ought to confine its activities. What I object to is the attempt of the national body to cover territory over which it should not seek to hold sway.

The national body has gone into politics. It has got in up to its chin and its activities cause many persons to wonder if it is not adopting a course perilous to itself and the country. As a self-constituted advisory body to the Administration it has become almost offensively active in Washington. There can be no objection to the Chamber of Commerce of the United States making representations to the Government regarding matters which may or may not adversely affect the interests of its members, but when that body strays from its field in order to participate in disputes in which as an organization it is not properly concerned, it is time to register both a protest and a warning. It has appeared to many observers that this organization, with the assistance of the National Association of Manufacturers and other bodies is in reality, trying to dictate the entire policy of the Administration and Congress.

It was surely unnecessary for the Chamber of

Commerce of the United States to take part as an organization in the discussion of the proposed soldier bonus. Many persons are holding that organization responsible for the defeat of the measure. The policy adopted by the leaders during the campaign for adjusted compensation was fundamentally different from the war campaign of the organization during the dark days of 1917 and 1918. Julius Barnes and his associates at that time assured the selected men that there was nothing too good for them; that industry, finance and commerce would join with everything and everybody else in the country in registering their hearty appreciation of the services they had done for civilization.

The whole country seethed with enthusiastic admiration for the brave sons of noble American mothers. From scores of thousands of platforms in thousands of cities, towns and hamlets of the United States the story of the noble self-sacrifice of our boys was fervidly told by eloquent speakers, many of whom were associated with the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. They promised the boys everything which love and gratitude had to bestow.

If the American Legion and the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives or sweethearts of the former soldiers resent the meddling of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States in the adjusted compensation matter, they are doing a very natural thing. If they ask why the attitude of the Chamber of Commerce is now the very reverse of

what it was when we entered the war they are entitled to an answer and the answer should be more convincing than the one given the public.

That organization has told the Administration and Congress the country could not stand the monetary draft which such a measure would make on its resources. This answer does not satisfy the boys, neither does it convince the country. But without discussing the merits of the recently rejected bonus, it might be as well to suggest that but for the services of the boys the Chamber of Commerce of the United States might exist, if living at all, by the will and consent of the kaiser.

At least that or something like it is what their orators said in 1917 and 1918. Every orator from every platform and pulpit in the United States urged everybody to buy liberty bonds and to give to the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army and other organizations. Mr. Barnes was among the most conspicuous leaders in these worthy efforts and he did admirable service. All pledged the best they had and the best the country had to the country's defenders. In view of these historical facts, can the Chamber of Commerce of the United States expect a body of four million young men to repress entirely a feeling of very natural resentment? It does seem as though this vast commercial organization is going out of its way to stir up trouble and intensify the already hostile feeling. Then its leaders talk gloomily about the apparent unwillingness of the workers to cooperate with the Chamber in bringing to fruition its peculiar policies.

It is as well to say here that if responsible officers of the Government continue to accept and act upon the advice of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, they will find themselves totally out of touch with the people. In England the King can do no wrong, because he can do nothing at all without the consent of his ministers and they, not he, are held responsible for his acts. In France the President is precluded from doing anything officially right or wrong, because the Premier is the responsible officer of the Government.

In every self-governing nation in Europe the same system prevails. But in the United States the Chief Executive is held responsible by the public not alone for mistakes of the Administration, but for the errors of Congress as well. So, in selecting advisers would it not be well to choose them from among citizens who enjoy intimate association with the masses rather than among well-meaning gentlemen who live in an atmosphere of refined, unapproachable exclusion?

I am wondering if it would not be much better for the national authorities to seek advice, though it be delivered in a frank and blunt way, from men and women who have their hands on the pulse of the common people. It is not hard to know of what they are thinking.

CHAPTER XI

A Little Expensive Advice

THERE is a legend that a certain American lawyer received from a wealthy client the sum of one hundred thousand dollars for saying the single word "yes." There is reason to believe that this legend is more than imaginary, that it is founded upon actual fact. A little well-established and well-authenticated American history furnishes more than a match for this extraordinary tale. It cost the cotton growers and cotton spinners during the first decade of this century somewhere near a million dollars for a little advice. The cotton growers were the recipients of this expensive counsel and the spinners were the dispensers of it. The spinners meant well and the fact that the advice they gave those engaged in Dixie's staple industry was but a repetition of what has been given us from almost the first day that the cotton planter found in the Southland a promising field in which to ply his vocation, did not detract from the merits of their good intentions.

Some fifteen or sixteen years have slid into the vault of time since a plan was conceived for direct sale of cotton to the spinners. If this could be accomplished there would be no more need for exchanges and the multifarious agencies which take toll of both consumer and producer before the raw material is fabricated into material for wearing apparel or other needful manufactured articles.

The growers and cotton spinners decided that a great joint meeting of growers and the spinners of the world should be held in the Capital of the Nation. I attended the preliminary meeting at the Union League Club in New York. It was arranged to send a committee abroad whose duty it would be to confer with the spinners of Great Britain, France, Germany and other continental nations. Reservations had been made for me on the steamship which carried the delegation across the ocean, but matters of great importance detained me in this country.

The delegation was received with open arms. Conservative old England, canny Scotland, cautious France, and ambitious Germany each saw in the plan such merit as determined them to participate in the proposed conference. The representatives of the growers felt that at last the world was in a very large sense theirs. Cotton instead of making the South rich had kept it poor. It was most difficult to scratch a bare living from the soil, but if the spinners would play ball and buy direct from the soil, the growers felt that the end of the trouble was in sight.

The International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Associations heartily accepted the invitation to the conference. This formidable and far-reaching body was presided over by Charles W. Macara, who later received a baronetcy and has been known since as Sir Charles W. Macara, Bart. In addition to presiding over this great organization he especially spoke for the spin-

ners and cotton manufacturers of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, so when he accepted the invitation of the growers and spinners of the United States to participate in the deliberations of the conference, it was as the representative of every country on the outside of this hemisphere.

Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Russia, and Spain were among the major countries in the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Associations. If Sir Charles had been the only delegate to attend the conference from Europe he would be armed with official authority to speak for the trade in all the countries enumerated here. J. R. McColl, then at the head of a similar organization of spinners and manufacturers in the United States, accepted the invitation on behalf of the men and organizations engaged in the industry in this country.

The first conference was held at the Hotel New Willard, in Washington, in the spring of 1906. It was a notable event. Nearly every man engaged in the cotton industry who by virtue of his position was able to speak for large groups, for nations, or for continents was present and participated in the proceedings.

It is not necessary to give all the details of that historic conference. The growers thought they had come to solve the question of how the middleman might be eliminated and the profits from their business, if there be any, collected by themselves. They thought that having accepted an invitation to

the conference, the spinners and manufacturers were ready to cooperate with the growers in finding the necessary solution. To the farmers it appeared to be simple and easy. There was no reason why intermediary men and institutions should operate to the disadvantage of the grower and his customer. We naturally thought that the spinners would welcome an opportunity to release themselves from an intermediary incubus which was eating the very soul out of the original producer and bringing no apparent benefit to the manufacturer.

But we were rapidly and painfully disillusioned. We discovered very soon that the spinners and manufacturers had no intention of giving the cotton grower the means to acquire his economic independence. I recall that the topic assigned me in the great conference at Washington was "The Cost of Production." But I absolutely refused to discuss this topic unless somebody able to speak with authority for the spinners and manufacturers would tell what it cost them to produce the fabricated article. They were not inclined, however, to give reciprocal information, and my speech was not delivered. I thought it only fair if we told what it cost us to produce cotton they would tell the world what it cost to produce yarns, threads, and other articles manufactured from cotton. Pleading that it was not good policy to tell the secrets of their business the cotton manufacutrers preferred not to give the public the benefit of information which they had so sedulously withheld from time immemorial.

The plan to create an organization through which direct sales could be effected, was not made and the spinners and manufacturers returned to their respective homes, not, however, before giving us the wholesome advice spoken of in the beginning of this chapter. A little later, reason was given us for thinking that the spinners and manufacturers had seen a new light and were ready to offer something more substantial than advice. They took the initiative in proposing another conference which might be regarded as a second, but more numerously attended session of the Washington meeting.

Atlanta, Georgia, was selected as the meeting place for the new conference. The European delegates met with a large number of American spinners, manufacturers, and middlemen in New York and traveled on a luxuriously appointed special train to the cotton center of the world. The Southland received the visitors with characteristic courtesy, hospitality and enthusiasm. The guests showed due appreciation of the consideration extended them and the hopes of the cotton growers received an upward impulse. At last something would be done to remove intervening barnacles, and bring to the farmers a reward for their toil that would give them something more than beans, corn, and sow belly.

Hoke Smith, then Governor, received the delegates on behalf of the great State of Georgia. Ellison D. Smith, of South Carolina, who had not yet reached the United States Senate, made a speech to the assembled dignitaries, in which he

spoke of the "balmy atmosphere and the glorious sunshine of the Southland." It was an eloquent tribute to the climate and to Old Sol, but it did not seem to be appreciated by a very practical representative of the spinners of France.

"I would like to know what the hell the balmy atmosphere and the beautiful sunshine has to do with business anyhow," said a Frenchman attending the conference.

Well, the cotton growers didn't establish cooperative relations with the spinners even though they conferred in such an inviting environment. But again they were given good advice. They were told not to expose their product to the elements and to be very careful about cutting away from their proper connections certain fibers which trail through the cotton. They were also informed that it would be a good thing to kill the boll weevil, though, if I rightly remember, they did not offer us the means through which this could be achieved.

They had been honored by the whole South. The balmy atmosphere and the glorious sunshine were theirs to revel in, and the freedom of the whole State of Georgia was accorded them. They felt that some return ought to be made for these favors and that the return must be generous. So they gave advice with open hands. Their cups ran over. The prevailing spirit was beautiful to behold. It exuded a warmth in which souls of all bathed themselves.

After the conference the visitors bid us an effusive farewell and departed on their special train for

a visit to the historic spots of the Republic. Luxury, refinement, art and culture predominated. The product of these was greatly in evidence. But the cotton growers were still selling through agents, not of their own choosing; the exchanges were still gambling with the product of excessive toil, and the spinners and manufacturers continued to purchase their supplies of raw material, not directly, but indirectly, from the producers.

It may be that among the hundreds of representatives of the cotton manufacturing industry who met us at Atlanta, could be found some who were willing to entertain a proposal for direct purchase, but if so their voice was drowned in the general chorus of polite but effective dissent. Literally billions of dollars in accumulated or potential wealth were represented at these two conferences. Some of the most splendid intellects that the world has yet produced directed or took part in the proceedings. But the net result was a further discouragement of any efforts by agriculture to cooperate with those who amass fortunes out of its products. Yet I must not be understood as slamming the door in the face of all honest men who seek association with the farmers for mutual benefit. The door still hangs on its hinges and there are no locks nor bolts on it.

CHAPTER XII

Uncle Reuben at the Peace Conference

UNCLE REUBEN decided that he was entitled to a place at the Peace Conference in Paris. He felt that he would be called upon to assume a very large part of the burdens incident to world reconstruction. He was urged to supply the means necessary to win the war and history tells us how he responded. The National Board of Farm Organizations and the National Farmers' Union invited me to become their representative in Paris. After some consideration I accepted. I don't usually accept responsibility unless I am fairly well convinced in advance that I will be able to make good use of it.

Uncle Reuben wanted peace. The war had cost him very dearly. The old men, the young women and the old women and the boys under military age stayed at home and raised a crop such as the world had never known before. Uncle Reuben had made possible the winning of the war and if he had been recalcitrant he could have made impossible any long-sustained war. He could have done this simply by declining to produce. Now the war was at an end, or at least the visible and physical fighting had terminated, he wanted a just and righteous peace.

I knew when I reached Paris that all the influence which agriculture, though it be internationally

mobilized, could bring to bear on the ambassadors, would not deflect them from their course. President Wilson had demanded that there should be "open covenants openly arrived at." This was treated as a nice piece of phraseology, nevertheless expressing a doctrine that was impracticable. Lovers of English praised the masterful style, but they decided to discuss the momentous questions in secret and evolve pacts without referring to the great masses of the people who fought the war, but didn't have any hand in MAKING it.

Uncle Reuben knew that he would be expected ultimately to provide the means through which the immense war debt would be paid. He also knew that he would be required to fill the yawning void made through the destruction of so vast an amount of wealth. Therefore, was it not proper that he should go to Paris and see if he could not contribute something to an assured and a permanent world peace?

I carried with me from the United States so many letters of introduction from men high in public life that I was compelled to buy a special satchel in which to carry them.

I knew before I finally accepted the mission from the farmers if I went as an ordinary individual I would not even be able to make a chalk mark, much less an impression, but as the representative of the world's indispensable industry there was a chance that I would obtain a hearing and get tangible results. My friends in and out of Congress were impressed with the necessity for giving to my mission

at least a semi-official character. The sequel shows that I was accorded many of the courtesies usually shown to a man who enjoys the rank of ambassador. In the middle of the winter of 1918 I embarked for Europe on board the *Baltic*. A Congressman obtained my passports and at the division where such documents are prepared hundreds of other applicants were passed over and I was rapidly reached. The official in charge at first intimated that I would have to await my turn.

"Await his turn," indignantly said Congressman Larson, of Georgia. "Don't you know that Mr. Barrett represents the world's greatest industry and it is most important that he reach Paris at the earliest possible moment?" At any rate, as the spokesman for a very large and distinguished body of my friends, the Congressman succeeded in convincing the passport official that to issue my passport immediately would be the part of official discretion and it was issued at once.

But during that period it was a far cry from a passport obtained in Washington and vised by the proper official in New York, to solid footing on the soil of another land. It was but the initial step in a winding stairway of diplomatic difficulty. Many persons who were given passports at Washington failed to arrive at their destination. Sometimes they were arrested as they were about to embark and often when they managed to get beyond the three-mile limit they were locked in their cabins and treated as suspicious persons.

Many who thought that a passport entitled them

fully to the right of entry on the soil upon which they had documentary authority to tread, found that before leaving the boat they were subjected to cruel questioning and to an examination compared to which the third degree of the New York or Chicago police stations would be mild and amateurish. Three men on the boat on which I traveled were placed under arrest and rumors spread thick and fast that others were to be treated in the same way. It was a time when nobody was immune from suspicion and when a word from any person might result in the incarceration of a perfectly innocent citizen. A passport may have been obtained by fraud or the wireless may have announced that the person traveling by virtue of such authority had been further investigated and some new facts brought to light. Hence it would not be wise to permit him to land. Passport or no passport he was confined to his cabin or relegated to the brig.

A fog made docking in Liverpool impracticable, so we stood by in the bay. Officials of the British War Office, secret service men, representatives of Scotland Yard and others associated directly or indirectly with the Government, boarded the ship. Then each passenger was treated to a grueling and searching examination. I was just walking up the starboard companion way from the main saloon on the deck in which my cabin was located, when I saw coming my way, an officer of the ship and a captain in the British Army. Knowing that no stranger, no matter what his credentials in those times, was free from suspicion, I confess to a little

trepidation when looking at me, the officer of the ship said to his associate:

"There is Mr. Barrett coming toward us now." My heart sank. My knees were a little weak. Nobody can contemplate an examination by an official of a foreign Government in a foreign port during a World War without feeling a certain sense of insecurity. I was quite conscious of the fact that there was not and could not be anything in my record into which anybody would be justified in inquiring, but I knew if a grilling was in store, there was no way to avoid it. Great was my relief when the British officer approached me with an affable smile and extended hand and said:

"Mr. Barrett, I am Captain Cavendish, of the War Department and have been assigned to the pleasant duty of escorting you to shore." Every reader of British history knows something of the illustrious Cavendish family. I was asked no questions, my baggage was not examined, I was subjected to no annoying espionage, but was treated in all respects as though I were an ambassador. And so I was. I was representing an industry without which war would be impossible and peace treaties would be unknown, for humanity would not exist. I felt a pardonable pride in the contemplation of this great fact and I accepted these attentions, not for myself, but for the farmers of my beloved country. About four hundred ordinary mortals were being subjected to an examination that Mephistopheles would never be able to contrive, while I as the humble representative of

Uncle Reuben was occupying the place of a distinguished guest. Captain Cavendish took me to his boat from whence we sailed to the dock at Liverpool and on to London.

In London I was given a dinner and treated with gratifying honors. I was so treated, not because of any personal achievement, but because even at that time the thinking people of Great Britain were wondering where the food supplies for the immediate future would be obtained and in my humble self they saw one means through which this question might be favorably answered. I did not tarry long in Great Britain because I knew that the Government of the world had virtually been transferred for the time to Paris. So I hurried across the channel and to Paris where a delegation conducted me to rooms reserved at the Hotel Ritz. It was the most interesting and most thrilling experience of my life. For the first time in history agriculture had received world recognition and through the medium of an humble Georgia cracker.

Shortly after arriving in Paris, Lloyd George sent a Naval official who is in reality the man who arranges all social functions for the Prime Minister to the hotel to arrange a conference between himself and me. Sir William Wiseman, the right hand man of the then Premier drove up in a magnificent Government car.

"May I escort you over?" Sir William said after shaking hands with me.

"You sure can for I have to get over to the

headquarters of Mr. Lloyd George in some way." The Britisher smiled and took me to the car.

"I want you to help me get our farm program before the delegates to the Peace Conference," I said to the Premier, during our interview. I then presented him with the following program which American agriculture commissioned me to present at the Peace Conference:

a. Extension and improvement of the International Agricultural Institute at Rome.

b. Adoption, so far as practicable, of uniform system of crop estimating and reporting and reports on manufacturers throughout the world.

c. Inclusion in the League of Nations of a special body having the international interests of agriculture directly in charge.

d. Adoption as a part of the constitution of the League of Nations of the principle of conservation of natural resources throughout the world and especially in all lands held under the jurisdiction of the League, whether such resources be found on the farm or elsewhere.

e. Provision for cooperative investigation of the relation of weather to crops in all parts of the world.

f. Indorsement of a set of international agricultural principles, including:

1. Equality of pay, opportunity and social reward for equal skill and equal work in agriculture as compared with other occupations.

2. Universal free education for farm children universally accessible.

3. Extension of the benefits of modern civilization to the open country, in spite of the added cost, part of which should be borne by general taxation.

4. Universal recognition of the right of farmers to bargain collectively through cooperative and other associations no less than other workers.

5. Adoption of the principles of gradual abolition of farm tenancy, on the theory that no land should be held permanently for renting.

6. Recognition of the right of each nation to withhold from export, supplies essential to agriculture which are limited in quantity, subject to withholding such supplies only when so limited.

7. Recognition of the principle that the depression of agriculture constitutes the central danger to civilization and that the demand for cheap food at the expense of a decent standard of living on the farm leads to agricultural disintegration and general decay.

8. Recognition of the principal that the compensation of agricultural producers on the basis of cost of production plus a reasonable profit is vital to the maintenance of a permanent agriculture, and therefore of a permanent civilization; and that provision should be made for maintaining this principle throughout the world by means of the regulation of International Trade.

"I will not only do that, but I will be very glad to help you dispose of your surplus products if you will help me establish a line of credits," the British Premier heartily replied. It was evident to me that the eminent statesman thought by establishing

European credits part at least of the rural problem as it affects the United States would be solved. It might be as well to say here that if the statesmanship of America and the world could have evolved a plan such as Lloyd George suggested the terrible deflation of which our producers were made the special victims might have been obviated. We could not extend credit to Europe while the financial fountains in our own country were either frozen or completely dried up. Still, it may not be too late to do something along the line proposed by the War Premier of the British Empire.

I was especially interested in the anxiety displayed by Mr. Churchhill. He is American on his mother's side and few statesmen of Great Britain enjoy a more intimate knowledge of American agriculture than he does. During my conversation with him, he made statements and forecasts, practically all of which have since come true.

"You had just as well get ready to feed some folks over here," Mr. Churchhill said to me. In this statement clothed in such homely phraseology, the Englishman showed me that the world was then preparing to lean upon the strong arm of America in peace just as it did in war. He knew that Europe, nearly bankrupt and torn into a thousand fragments, would be compelled to appeal to Uncle Sam to guide her in the dark days that were to come.

In the course of time I met Colonel E. M. House, the supposed confidential adviser to President Wilson. I had not been with him many

minutes when I concluded that the people of the United States had been led by some extraordinary process of reasoning to adopt the false view that Mr. Wilson relied on the counsel of his friend from Texas. I went over the program of the farmers with Colonel House and he said:

"I am for it, but see White and Bliss." I knew it was not worth while seeing these gentlemen, because I was quite convinced that estimable as they were and always have been, they could not conclusively speak for the American Government.

I submitted the plan to Secretary of State Lansing and was given full assurance of his kindly interest in it.

"Certainly I am with you," said the Secretary, "I am a member of the Grange in New York."

Premier Clemenceau, the Tiger of France, treated me with characteristic Gallic empressment.

"This is the first time I have had a chance to shake hands with six million five hundred thousand farmers all in one," said this illustrious leader. He had been told by a rather fulsome admirer of mine that I came to Paris to speak for six million five hundred thousand American tillers of the soil and seemed to be immensely pleased to meet one armed with such authority. As practically every farm organization in the nation had indorsed our program it is not too much to say that the estimate of my authority given by my friend to the French Premier was not overdrawn.

Orlando, of Italy; Venezelos, of Greece, and many other men of world distinction discussed with

me the world's needs from an agricultural viewpoint. There seemed to be a general agreement which might be reached, but progress toward this objective was halted or choked by the ambitious designs of nations great and small. We are in the habit of berating to the full extent of our powers of lung or pen, the great nations because of their intolerance and selfishness, but at the Paris conference the newly born sovereignties were no less selfish than the long existent world powers. Only their designs are more narrowly sphered and their ability and opportunities more circumscribed.

CHAPTER XIII

A Box Car and a Grand Ball

FROM the interior of a day coach to the center of the official heart of the world epitomises a generation of achievement by Uncle Reuben. A little more than a generation ago a farmer urged by a small group of his associates got on a day coach of a train and traveled from Central Georgia to the Capital City of the Nation. It was a laborious task to obtain the money necessary to finance the trip, but his neighbors filled a tiny purse, wished him God-speed and in the course of time he reached Washington.

Like his associates he believed that all he would have to do would be to notify the powers that be of his presence and then in true Georgian directness he would be met and his complaint sympathetically listened to. But when he arrived here he found himself in the midst of a veritable network of social and political intrigue. Nobody had any time to listen to an obscure Georgia cracker. The railways had first call on the legislative thought.

Uncle Reuben, though he was told that he was the center of the earth, the cream of every quart of milk that was ever produced, the one citizen with whom it would be impossible for the nation to dispense, found that in Washington there was not a single official door open to him. Even the janitors and scrub women at the capital looked at

him with very ill favor and Congressional secretaries when not amused by his appearance, resented his intrusion. But he thought that if the ills of agriculture could be cured by legislative process, he was entitled to consult the physicians. He walked through mazes and labyrinths day after day, but made no progress. It appeared to him that every man from whom he sought information was so busy trying to land a political job for himself that he hadn't time even to be ordinarily courteous to a somewhat shabbily attired pilgrim from the land of watermelons and cotton.

The little stock of money he brought with him melted away. He lived frugally and slept in a hall bedroom in a cheap Pennsylvania Avenue hotel. Finally after he had been in Washington several weeks and had not even talked to a Member of Congress, he gave up in despair and looked longingly in the direction of home. His money, with the exception of a little small change was gone. He had failed and did not for that reason feel that he was justified in appealing to his friends to pay his fare home, so he reluctantly entered a box car and was carried over the Southern Railway to the village near his little and heavily mortgaged farm. Dusty, grimy, half starved and shaking as though with an ague, for winter had come, this farmer timidly and shamefacedly embraced his family. He wept, but he had done all that was possible at that time to achieve. He joined the Farmers' Alliance and then began a long and weary effort to convert failure into success.

That box car, that timid, shivering and half-starved farmer, came vividly to my mind when the great agricultural reception was held during the International Conference on Limitation of Armaments, given to the official world. It was the greatest reception ever held in Washington. The official performances in this respect are mild, tame and colorless when compared with that immense social event. Uncle Reuben on this occasion sure did shine. But he did more than shine. He took possession of the world's diplomatic and political thought.

When it was first proposed to hold the reception I was criticised because I had suggested that we take Uncle Reuben into a new and untrodden path. That is exactly what we must do if we would make him completely successful in his aspirations.

Uncle Reuben being the greatest factor in the material world, I felt that there was nothing too great or too good for him. He should be the head of every parade, the center of every picture, the soul of everything which makes for advancement and progress, so my associates and myself determined that if we were to hold a reception it would be such a one as would outshine anything of the kind that official Washington had ever seen.

The first thing necessary was to be assured of decorations appropriate for the occasion. To this end we proposed to have the White House flowers. These are magnificent and gorgeous affairs, representing the best efforts of the greatest florists in the United States, but they are only for use on

state occasions, or for Cabinet functions. They had never before served any other purpose. They are in the official custody of the Department of Agriculture and the Secretary guards them jealously. They are the pride of the most beautiful and bounteous capital on earth. Nevertheless we insisted that the White House flowers decorate the home of the National Board of Farm Organizations. I proposed this in a conversation with Secretary Wallace.

"Mr. Secretary," I said, "Uncle Reuben is going to give a reception to the ambassadors to the International Conference on Limitation of Armaments, which of course will include all their attaches and all official and social Washington as well. Now we want the White House flowers to decorate our building for the occasion."

Amazed at the proposal, the Secretary rejoined:

"Why, whoever heard of the like?"

"I don't know. I never did. But, Mr. Secretary, we want the White House flowers."

"Mr. Barrett," he expostulated, "the White House Flowers are only for the White House and for use by Cabinet officers at social functions."

"I know that," I returned, "but if it were not for Uncle Reuben there would be no White House to be decorated and neither would there be any Cabinet."

"That being the case," said Mr. Wallace, "you shall have the White House flowers." And that very day auto trucks began to deliver the precious floral products to our home on Eye Street and the

decorators got to work. The art displayed in this work was of a kind which could not but deeply impress the esthetic sense.

Then the question of how to get the invitations to the ambassadors, their attaches and their friends became somewhat an acute problem. It should be explained here that foreign ambassadors, ministers and envoys hesitate about accepting invitations unless the individual, association or club issuing them has the indorsement of the State Department. Why this is necessary should be obvious. Ambassadors and ministers have been tripped up and their usefulness impaired through the serpentine influence of a smiling host or hostess, and for years, if only to guarantee the good faith of the proposed host, the invited foreigner is careful to find whether the host is persona grata with the Government. I called up Secretary Hughes and the following conversation took place:

"Mr. Secretary," I said, "I wish you would notify the foreign ambassadors that we are all right and they can properly accept an invitation to Uncle Reuben's reception."

"I will be very glad to do it," cordially responded the Primer Cabinet officer.

He was about to hang up when I hurriedly said:

'Wait a minute, please, sir; we want you to see that the invitations are delivered by Marines in their cars."

"What did you say?" returned the astonished Secretary of State.

"Yes, we want you to deliver the invitations in

the manner I indicate. Uncle Reuben is the most important factor here and he is entitled to this consideration." Undoubtedly the Secretary stroked his beard and smiled, but an assurance that our wishes would be complied with was almost immediately forthcoming. We were only demanding that the habit of saying we were the salt of the earth be comfirmed by action which might give some substantial support to assertion.

So the invitations were delivered in state. The Navy, the Army and all the official forces of the United States were placed at the temporary command of Uncle Reuben so that the function upon which he had set his heart would not be wanting in dignity, in authority and in that national and world recognition to which we have always contended agriculture is entitled.

Not only did Secretary Hughes see that the invitations were delivered under the seal, approval and authority of the United States Government, but he gave the function his personal approval, hence the sanction of the entire Cabinet by standing in the receiving line and cordially greeting the guests as they passed by. The headquarters of the national board has been the scene of many a brilliant social function. As the home of members of three different Cabinets it naturally became the Mecca for the socially ambitious, but never had anybody who attended any of the entertainments in that building in the past witnessed anything which could approximate in splendor and completeness Uncle Reuben's reception.

Among the first to enter were Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador, and Lady Geddes. Then came Monsieur Jesserand, the Ambassador from France, and Mme. Jusserand. Poland was represented in the person of Prince Lubermirsky, her able and virile minister. From Italy, Japan, China, Siam, far off Australia and New Zealand came ambassadors and military and naval attaches arrayed in all their splendor. The diplomatic world was there. Men eminent in letters, great journalists, famous artists, jurists of world repute and lawyers of the highest merit added dignity to the occasion.

United States Senators, Representatives in Congress, heads of great uplift associations, and leaders in every kind of movement for the betterment of mankind, responded to Uncle Reuben's invitation. There was merrymaking. There was dancing. Agile and beautiful youth made a charming foil for serious and sober minded maturity. None of that froth which critics say swims upon the surface of society obscuring what good there is in it, was evident at this gathering.

The eminent men and women from all the world came to learn something of Uncle Reuben. When a woman gowned at an enormous expense would dance with a farmer from the plains, she would not do it in that patronizing way so offensive to the manly man, but she would seek that entertainment because she apparently truly enjoyed it. She had come to learn about Uncle Reuben. They had seen him lampooned as they flayed him with stale

quips and old aged jeers, but they had never got a close up view of him and when they got it they appeared to be more than satisfied with what they saw. As one of the guests told me, there was seen in Uncle Reuben on that occasion those sterling qualities of mind and soul which carry hope to a distressed and hard pressed world.

One of the most noticeable and impressive features of the function was a complete absence of that artificiality which makes spiritual and intellectual intercourse with mankind in the so-called higher spheres so difficult. There was splendor, but it was the splendor of simplicity. Everybody was perfectly frank and therefore everybody was at home. There were no wall flowers. All received warm and courteous attention. I don't know whether to say in the leveling process that the guests came down or up to Uncle Reuben. At any rate everybody appeared to be on a happy level, none feeling that he or she was viewing from a lofty height some person or persons with whom closer contact might prove to be objectionable.

Whether the results accruing from that reception will prove to be permanent or evanescent depends upon the use we make of so valuable an experience. Certainly those of us who conceived the idea had no thought in view but to impress on the world through its assembled ambassadors and ministers, and the United States through her Cabinet officers, Senators and Representatives, the importance of agriculture as an industry and its ability as an institution to participate in the direction of national

and world policies. I think we succeeded in showing that in any effort to improve world conditions, agriculture must have its rightful place. But above all we convinced the world and this nation that agriculture has both the inclination and ability to take a leading part in bringing the world back to its proper moorings.

President Harding had recognized agriculture by appointing the writer to membership on the advisory council of the Conference on Limitation of Armaments. The world had recognized agriculture by accepting, through its representatives, an invitation to our reception. It was more than a social affair. It was the inauguration of one of the greatest movements of modern times and it also signalized the successful entry into Washington of Uncle Reuben. I only wish we had that box car in which the farmer rode back to his home after being so ingloriously repulsed by official Washington.

CHAPTER XIV

The Deflation Debacle of 1920-21

THE policy of deflation adopted by leaders of the Federal Reserve Board has resulted in the total disappearance of cattle from "a thousand hills" in the United States.

The Nation has literally been eating up its substance. It has been devouring its heritage. The policy of the assistant government, supported so loyally by Wall Street, has already resulted in the disappearance from the soil of scores of thousands of our most rugged and loyal young men.

I am aware that the Federal Reserve Board indignantly disclaims any responsibility for the frightful debacle of 1920-21. But there is no other place on which to fix the blame. It is impossible to remove the burden to other shoulders. The testimony of John Skelton Williams before the Joint Congressional Commission of Agricultural Inquiry and the fact that, while Wall Street was revelling in a plethora of cash and credit, the agricultural sections of the country were starving, furnishes all the proof necessary to the establishment of the fact that gross and tyrannical discrimination by those who controlled the credit of the Nation was practiced.

An agency originally designed to be a means of alleviation became an instrument of tyranny. Thousands of farmers were mentally tortured,

some of them into insanity, some of them into suicide, by the stupid and tyrannical policy adopted in those dark and forbidding days.

There can be no question in the mind of the thinking man that the cruel, remorseless, pitiless and criminal deflation practiced in those days was premeditated. It was well thought out. Every angle was secretly discussed and without consulting Congress, without taking the people into their confidence, those who had the power inaugurated a policy that was as stupid as it was cruel.

The Nation was just emerging from a mighty struggle in which we were victorious. We were told that a new era of justice and right would follow the conclusion of peace; that tyranny would be dethroned; that justice would cover this Nation as the waters do the mighty deep. Our gallant soldiers, many of whom left their bodies beneath the soil of sunny France or brought them back to this country maimed by the enemy's bullet or emaciated through sickness, rightly received the plaudits of a grateful people.

But the new era was inaugurated with a reign of economic terror unparalleled in the history of this country. Prices of farm commodities did not decline, as Senator Kendrick in a recent article in the *Farmers' National Magazine* said: "They tumbled and fell." There was no gradual adjustment. No permission was given to dispose of crops which were sown and harvested at a cost unprecedented in history, except at ruinous sacrifices. Credit was

ruthlessly denied and the means of orderly marketing of products, therefore, not available.

During this time the retail meat dealer, the retail clothing man, the retail shoe seller and the retailer in all lines were obtaining war prices for their overstocks. They were able to obtain money on reasonable terms with which to carry them over to the next season. But agriculture which supplies the raw material for shoes and clothing, which raises the steer from which the beefsteaks are cut, or the hog from which the finished pork product is obtained, was told that it must sell at prices fixed by an arbitrary and artificial system, or be prepared to lose everything. No prudent man can, and no prudent man would, attempt to defend so ruthless a policy.

That the plan to deflate agriculture and at the same time give the speculative element in Wall Street all the money and credit necessary, was the result of a cruel and premeditated design is proved by all the circumstances of the case. It was a monumental crime, cunningly conceived and brazenly executed.

The program briefly was:

"Begin to bring down prices by forcing the farmers to sell what stock they have. This can be done by denying them credit and by forcing their local bankers to call loans. After attending to the farmers, force labor to behave. At present the working men and their families go too often to the movies. Then see to it that they are compelled to work from ten to twelve hours a day so that they

will be too tired to leave the house after their day of toil."

How well this plan has been carried out in so far as agriculture is concerned, any farmer who has been the victim of so monstrous a conspiracy is able to tell. But the poor fools who planned to deflate, humiliate and permanently injure agriculture never stop to think that they are gradually drying up the sources of wealth in this country, that they are surely reducing the agricultural man power.

The scars inflicted on agriculture in 1920-21 will never be erased. They will always disfigure the fair face of the greatest of all industries. But the worst effect of the colossal and monumentally stupid blunder of that period is found in the fact that hundreds of thousands of farmers are disgusted with their occupation and are telling their sons and daughters to prepare for an easier and more lucrative occupation. They are not speaking of the grandeur of farm life any more. They are, however, complaining of its drudgery. They are not telling of the glorious independence from want and care Uncle Reuben enjoys. But they are telling their children that he is a slave to the distributor of his products, the manipulator of markets.

Hence, the child as it begins to acquire some knowledge of the world and sees the drab and dreary life that its parents live and witnesses the continual and never-ending struggle against the sheriff, who may any time visit them with a fore-

closure notice, conceives the idea that he will seek some more gainful occupation.

Green pastures, fields of waving grain, wooded hills and fruit-bearing trees, do not appeal to him. They do not stir the poetry in his nature, for to him they typify a monotonous struggle, a fearful and continuous effort to save the family and the family name. Days of sunshine and nights of beauty, when the stars twinkle benevolently or the moon shines gloriously, may stir the souls of men and women who visit the farm, but to the tiller of the soil, who lives only to work for his creditors, they carry neither joy nor hope.

The farmer is not impressed with the bleating of the sheep in the meadow or on the hills because he knows that the fleece goes to enrich the man who "toils not neither does he spin." I know that the farmer is not insensible to the poetic stirrings of the soul, nor to the many appeals which nature makes to his heart, but sunshine loses its brilliance and art loses its appeal when drudgery entirely fills the place of joyful occupation.

This may be an extreme picture. It may be charged that it is an outburst of incurable pessimism. I think I may say there are few men in the world who are better acquainted than the writer with Uncle Reuben. I have seen him in his home in every State in the Union. I have seen him at the market place. I have seen him at his meetings, in his churches, in his schools and wherever he may meet his fellows. I have seen him as he was engaged in every species of farming and have eaten

and slept with him in hundreds of counties in this land. I believe myself, therefore, to be qualified to judge him and speak for him. When I say that the conditions under which the farmer in the United States is working are destroying affection for his occupation, I tell only the truth and not the full truth at that.

Such conditions not only produce in his mind an incurable antipathy to his occupation, but breed a sort of a sullen feeling of rebellion, to which expression may be given in some form or other as the years go by. Men who smugly collect their dividends or clip their coupons seem wholly to forget that they clip their coupons mainly because some forty million men, women and children are working continuously producing the wheat, the corn, the cotton, the wool, the fruit and the livestock from which such revenue is derived. They forget that the foundation of this Nation is its agriculture and they stupidly proceed to rock and rive the only real and permanently secure thing that this or any other nation may hope to possess.

In the early months of 1921 I wrote an article for the *Farmers' National Magazine* in which I proposed that a Joint Congressional Commission of Agricultural Inquiry be created, the duty of which would be to discover and publish the causes of the present condition of agriculture and propose remedies. The story was captioned: CONGRESS, ITS DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY.

Shortly after this article appeared, I waited on Senator Lenroot, of Wisconsin, and Congressman

Strong, of Kansas, and suggested that they introduce the measure in their respective Houses. They each readily responded to my request and after the proposal had been whipped into legal form, a concurrent resolution was duly drawn and referred to the Committee on Agriculture in the Senate, and the Committee on Rules of the House. Limited hearings were held and the resolution was safely piloted in a very brief period through both branches of the American Congress. As it was a concurrent resolution the rules or the law did not require that it receive Executive approval.

Senator Lenroot declined to accept the post of chairman of this very important commission and that position was given to Sydney Anderson, a one-time progressive from the State of Minnesota. Believing that Mr. Anderson was still progressive I interposed no objection when he was selected for so exalted a duty.

Any person reading the resolution fairly could reach no other conclusion than that the commission was obliged to find all the truth concerning the condition of agriculture as it then was and also identify the persons, institutions and interests responsible. To get the truth, it was essential that the entire economic system of the United States be investigated and in a most thorough manner.

Congress had placed no obstacles in the way of the commission. It was not hampered by lack of either funds or time. It was empowered to hire all necessary secretaries, clerks, advisers and help of

all kind. It had the Treasury of the United States upon which to draw for expenses.

The National Farmers' Union, which originated the scheme and authorized me as its president to proceed in the most vigorous manner, to assist in its execution, was supported by every farm organization in the United States. All wanted the truth. None desired concealment, or palliation. Soft pedaling would satisfy none. They desired a sweeping, manly, courageous investigation. We thought that such a commission, possessing such broad and sweeping powers, would discover what had become of the property of the farmers which had sifted through various processes into the hands of those who had not earned it.

I had hoped that the commission, which had been given so wonderful an opportunity for constructive service, would be able to tell the country who and what had robbed and plundered both the producers and consumers. I had hoped that such a commission, armed with an authority given by unanimous vote of both Houses, would lay bare the methods through which farmers by the scores of thousands had in a brief twelve months been reduced from comparative affluence to the very borderland of beggary.

To get the truth it was essential that credit systems, marketing systems, transportation systems and the men directing these be investigated in a most thorough manner. Under the terms of the resolution there was no honest escape from this duty.

With the Congress of the United States supporting the commission, it seemed to me to be a very simple matter to force the great exploiting interests of the country to open their books. It did not seem possible that the men and interests who have long withheld from agriculture its right to a fair share of what it produces could escape exposure by a commission armed with every right and authority necessary to discover the facts.

I am not ordinarily fond of exposing men, but if the public good is to be served by such a policy, then individuals who violate the rights of others should not complain if they are placed in the limelight for general observation. I do not seek thrills and sensations, but I would not suppress the truth merely to avoid them. If the truth thrills that is not its fault.

The commission had hardly been organized when Chairman Anderson made it known that he was opposed to public hearings. He intimated that the commission could achieve its task by simply gathering available data at the several departments and bureaus of Government.

This information came as a shock to my associates and myself. It convinced us that Mr. Anderson was totally destitute of the vision necessary to the prosecution of the gigantic task assigned his colleagues and himself by the Congress of the United States. The idea of reducing a great body, charged with an immense obligation to the country to a mere research bureau which would operate in secret and behind securely locked doors, was espe-

cially repellant to those who had conceived the idea of discovering and publishing a great truth. The suggestion of Mr. Anderson was in reality an affront to the Congress which had created the commission and an insult to the intelligence of all people who had given any study to the magnitude of the task allotted to the body which had honored him by making him chairman.

Surely this was not the fiery, fervid, progressive Anderson of the days when Cannonism was an issue in the House. The change wrought in him in the decade that had gone since he made a two-fisted fight against czarism in the House, was such as to make the illustrious Roosevelt turn with apprehension in his grave.

The idea of searching in the mouldy, moth-eaten files of the departments and bureaus of Government for truth which could only be made apparent when subjected to solar light of day, would have been laughable if it had not been so tragic. The way to avoid the truth is to confine your search to the labored, involved and intricate publications of the departments. It may be that in spots a fact of value would be revealed. But the properly equipped investigator will seek the truth in its home and will avail himself of the powerful agency of publicity to force doors, otherwise, securely closed. to swing on their hinges.

I remonstrated personally with Mr. Anderson and he finally agreed to hold hearings. He said he had never known hearings to be productive of any good. This may be true, but whether they pro-

duce anything worth while depends largely upon the sincerity of the tribunal which listens. But as all who are acquainted with things in Washington know, the chairman of the committee is usually its soul. It is he who creates the machinery. It is he who is held responsible for results.

The hearings had not proceeded very far until it became quite evident that Mr. Anderson, Congressman Ogden L. Mills of New York, and Senator Irvine L. Lenroot were much inclined to suppress certain vital facts. Mr. Mills, who is closely associated with Wall Street and is a director of banks, trust companies, railway companies, including the Santa Fe and other great industrial concerns, came to the defense of New York banks with marked energy. If Mr. Mills had been the retained counsel of the interests attacked by witnesses for the National Farmers' Union, he could not have more vigorously, energetically and earnestly defended them.

Spokesmen for the National Farmers' Union and associated organizations had given their testimony. They told of the fact of deflation and its ruinous consequences, but were not exactly able to give the commission full information regarding the identity of the persons and interests which precipitated it.

To keep the record clear it is proper for me to say that although Mr. Anderson had the Treasury of the United States to draw upon he never, to my knowledge, brought a witness to Washington at the expense of the Government. Denying the im-

poverished farmers the necessary means of reaching Washington it was impossible for many of them to relate facts which ought to have been supplied. It was a time when Congress was trying to make a record for economy, but surely when the commission was seeking the cause for the pitiful condition of agriculture, the dollars necessary to finance the cost of obtaining such information would be cheerfully given.

As already pointed out the expense account of the commission was unlimited, but Mr. Anderson declined to draw for sufficient to meet the most obvious needs. Many farmers journeyed to Washington at a financial sacrifice. Two hundred dollars to them was in many cases all the difference between poverty and riches. They were proud to make this fact known and though they did not appeal to the commission for re-imbursement others spoke quietly to Mr. Anderson on their behalf, but were given no encouragement.

All who attended the hearings were painfully struck by the attempt of Mr. Mills, Senator Lenroot and Mr. Anderson, to suppress vital parts of the testimony of John Skelton Williams, who gave evidence at the request of the National Farmers' Union. He journeyed to Washington at his own expense for that purpose. Mr. Mills raised a point of order against the publication in the record of certain speeches and articles of Mr. Williams which very clearly established the fact that Governor W. G. P. Harding had precipitated a perilous policy of deflation. Mr. Anderson sustained the point

of order, but an appeal was taken from the chair. The appeal carried by a vote of five to four. Those voting to upset the ruling of Mr. Anderson were Senators Pat Harrison, of Mississippi, and Robinson, of Arkansas, and Congressmen Ten Eyck, of New York, Funk, of Illionis, and Hatton Sumners of Texas. The four who voted to exclude the testimony of Mr. Williams from the record were Senators Capper and McNary and Congressmen Anderson and Mills.

Thus the lines were sharply drawn. The testimony of Mr. Williams was given under circumstances which might well exasperate a man of his temperament, but he managed against continued interruptions and in spite of the manifest hostility of Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mills and Senator Lenroot to tell his story.

Mr. Mills took a leading part in bullying and badgering the witness. The fact that the witness had held for years the very important post of Controller of the Currency seemed not to have any effect in softening the asperities of his tormentors. It was evident that the trio did not want the truth as the Farmers' Union witness was unfolding it. His narative which he had prepared in an orderly manner, following closely the sequence of events from the time he associated himself with the Government of the United States until he severed his connection with its Treasury Department, was so torn by interruption, that the reader of the record is bewildered by the forest of extraneous matter which accompanied it.

To say that the former Controller of the Treasury was treated much as a petifogging lawyer would treat a witness in a chicken stealing case, is to keep well within the facts. Members of a tribunal professedly seeking the truth sought to obscure it. There is no escape from this conclusion. Why Mr. Mills should have taken such a stand is an easy question to answer. His training, environment and general association would make him the natural antagonist of Mr. Williams and it was to be expected that he would try by all available means to prevent the former Controller of the Currency from exposing the men and the means they adopted to crush agriculture. But reasons for the stand taken by Senator Lenroot and Mr. Anderson must be sought in another quarter.

Mr. Anderson came from the farm in Minnesota, that state which produces so rugged a citizenship. His original inclinations and his early political training had, it was thought, fitted him for championship of the rights of the plain people. Perhaps he has concluded that having raised enough dust to attract popular attention to him it is about time that he settled himself on the soft couch of eminent respectability and gathered to himself friends and associates who have discarded the rusticism of the past. In Washington the progressive of yesterday is sometimes the standpatter of tomorrow.

To give the real reason for Senator Lenroot's fierce antagonism to Mr. Williams, one would have to be more than a double mind reader. The

average accommodating politician is able effectively to fool the professional mind reader by having several minds carefully concealed, but ready to function in case of need. He makes up one at a time. He brings one of the concealed minds into action to meet what may be an unforeseen contingency. Sometimes the concealed mind is made up hastily and the machinery, for that reason, does not run as smoothly as he could wish. It is then that he must do a good deal of sidestepping and camouflaging.

It is just as well, perhaps, not to try to find the real motive for Senator Lenroot's attacks on Mr. Williams. The motive, after all, would be so involved and intricate as to require the services of the most skilled analyst to dissect it. So I will content myself with making known the fact that the junior Senator from Wisconsin added his power and influence to those who wanted to smother and strangle the truth. Incidentally it might be as well to make a record of the fact that it was largely through the influence of Senator Lenroot that Mr. Mills was appointed to serve on the commission.

Mr. Williams submitted with better grace than could be expected of the average man, to the verbal bulldozing of Mr. Mills, Mr. Anderson and Senator Lenroot. He was their quarry and they hunted, harried and beset him at every point. Mr. Williams said afterwards if they had publicly denounced him as a liar, they could not have been more offensive. Let the fact that Mr. Williams was testifying for the farmers of America be

grasped by the reader and then it will be obvious to even the citizen of small understanding, that the evident determination of the members of the commission mentioned was not alone to humiliate Mr. Williams, but to weaken the case of agriculture as well.

It was noticeable that when Governor Harding arose to reply to the criticisms of Mr. Williams, he was treated with graceful courtesy by the chairman, by Senator Lenroot and Mr. Mills. These gentlemen did not regard it as necessary to ask him a question. They did not clutter up the record with irrelevant verbal attacks on him, but permitted him to tell a very cleverly constructed story in which he proved to his own satisfaction that there had been no deflation, that agriculture had not been discriminated against, that orderly marketing of farm products had not been hindered or obstructed by an inimical financial policy.

Indeed, Governor Harding took pains to impress on the commission that the board had treated agriculture with more than ordinary tenderness. He did not tell, however, the story of how interviews were furnished to the press by the Treasury Department, interviews in which he cheerfully acquiesced, in which it was repeatedly stated that prices of farm products must come down. The psychological effect of such interviews on an already receding market were such as to completely demoralize the entire system.

He admitted that the board had announced a policy of "gradual" deflation. But as the sequence

shows, there was nothing gradual or progressive about it. The bottom fell out of the farm markets in a single day, almost in a single hour. The value had not been "legislated" out of farm products; it had been "proclaimed" out of them. Holding in the hollow of his hand the fortunes of millions of farmers through his power to regulate the distribution of credit, Mr. Harding proceeded, with the aid of willing associates, to do his deadly work.

Secretary Houston obstinately held to a moss-grown tradition that cheap food was essential to progress. He forgot entirely that the farm market is, after all, the greatest of all markets, and without it, values of every fabricated thing would sink and shrivel and fade away. It was impossible, however, to convince either Mr. Harding or Mr. Houston that the policy they had proclaimed would bring destruction, not alone to agriculture but to many other vital interests as well.

Contraction of farm markets through the shriveling up of credit sources was followed by the closing of thousands of manufacturing plants, the nearly complete suspension of foreign commerce and an army of unemployed which at one time swelled to five million seven hundred thousand citizens. Imagine if you can the immense economic loss which these figures illustrate. Mr. Harding, Mr. Houston and their confederates on Wall Street were frankly warned that the very conditions I speak of here would result from their unwarranted and unwarrantable policy. But they said there was

too much speculation, too much spending, too much extravagance and it must be stopped.

To correct the alleged extravagant habits of one section of our people they were apparently willing that another section be ruined. It is possible that the forces which precipitated the deflation complained of were not aware to what lengths it would go. But under the impulse of terrible momentum it got beyond their control. They could not, if they would, even arrest its progress, but like millions upon millions of our people were compelled to stand helpless until the conflagration which they had started moderated its fiery intensity or burned itself out. I am inclined to believe that Governor Harding, as obstinate and dogmatic as he is, would, when seeing the full and complete effects of his policy, try to recall the instructions he had caused to be issued providing for a restriction of credit.

CHAPTER XV

The Tariff Crazy Quilt

MEMBERS of Congress, especially some of those who belong to that new organization known as the Farm Bloc, express surprise when fault is found with the Agricultural record of the Senate and the House of Representatives. They point to a lot of bills which they have passed and a lot more that are pending and then they ask in what way they have failed, where they have been remiss, where they have not redeemed the promises of their respective parties when platforms were written and pledges made.

Newton once said when complimented on the enormous contribution he had made to science that he had gathered a few pebbles, but beyond him was an ocean of possible achievement into whose waters he had not even dared to plunge. Congress has gathered a few pebbles. It has even waded a short distance into the ocean, but has been driven back by the threatening waves.

This is not said in unkindness. It is only just to remark that there is no group in Congress which has any but a remote idea of the magnitude of the agricultural problem. And why should they? Agriculture from the congressional viewpoint is a new question. It is a new school of thought. It suggests matters hitherto not even discussed in Washington and opens avenues the existence of which

few in the years gone by had any knowledge whatever.

The Members of the Sixty-seventh Congress served but a very imperfect apprenticeship in the new school. To many of them it was a perpetually winding staircase, a maze, a bewildering forest. There was no thoroughfare. No way out into the open. It was not to be expected that during the lifetime of an imperfectly informed Congress the accumulated wrongs and errors of a century could be corrected. It was not to be expected that legislative minds schooled in academies where special privilege stands supreme could adjust themselves to the new school of thought in a short two years.

To cut away the barnacles, dispose of the clogging debris and clear the ship for action requires the exercise of the greatest brain and the most intensive energy and devotion this country has so far witnessed. Assuredly, a few pebbles have been gathered and incidentally a number of rocks have been thrown in the way of progress toward the objective which the farmers and their real friends have in view. The Sixty-seventh Congress plumes itself on having done more for agriculture than any Congress that has passed into history. Didn't it pass the emergency tariff bill and didn't it extend the life of the War Finance Corporation and didn't it also include in the McCumber-Fordney Tariff bill almost everything the farmer produces?

Yes, it did all of these things, but the average farmer is poorer today than when the Sixty-seventh Congress assembled in extraordinary session. Fore-

closures have increased by the thousands and debts have accumulated until from the throats of scores of thousands arises the despairing cry: "How long, Oh Lord, how long?" The cure for debt is not more debt. It is a better price for what you produce.

The Sixty-seventh Congress, driven by the complaints of farmers everywhere, did write into the tariff bill duties on many farm products. But Uncle Reuben is not fooled. He knows that if he is able to collect two hundred million dollars as a result of the "protection" given him it will be at an expense of about two billion dollars. But it is something to get back even 10 per cent of the money that has been filched from you through artificially increased prices for everything you have to buy. Unlike other tariff bills it makes provision for the return of part of the money out of which the farmers are robbed. There are some signs of progress here, though it is the kind of progress which leaves little room for real encouragement. The very fact that Uncle Reuben received some consideration, at least some notice from the tariff builders, is a sign that he has arrived in Washington and has created an impression.

Talking of the tariff, it might be well to remind the reader that it was the product of organized insincerity. I say without reservation or hesitation that not one-third of the Members of either House believed in the bill and it would have been relegated to the scrap heap if the Members thought it would be politically safe to so treat it. This fact is well

established and aptly illustrated in a conversation I had with a New York Congressman.

"All my inclinations, all my instincts and all the common sense I believe myself to be endowed with are in revolt against this tariff bill," he said.

"Then you are going to vote against it?" I said.

"Oh, no; I am going to vote for it. The bill is a regular Republican measure and I can't afford to quarrel with my party," was his frank rejoinder.

"But is it a statesmanlike action to vote for a bill you are entirely out of sympathy with simply to be in line with your party?" I asked him.

"No, it is not," he admitted, "but I have known statesmen to lose their jobs and I want to be a member of the Sixty-eighth Congress."

This revelation may come as a shock to people who are in the habit of squaring their actions with their consciences and making their votes harmonize with their inward convictions, but in Washington it is regarded as perfectly proper to ignore private views when voting on public questions. Such an attitude is immoral, but custom and habit have unseated conscience and placed expediency on the throne.

Congressmen talked quite openly of their dissatisfaction with the bill, but they were not courageous enough to return to their constituents with an admission that the lawmakers of their party were unable to pass a tariff measure. So they permitted a crazy quilt constructed out of wild economic guesses to obtain the sanction of their votes and then went to their constituents with the declara-

tion that the "best tariff measure in American history had been enacted." Fear of political consequences and not a desire to contribute to the public good is often the impelling motive for adopting legislation. Henry Clay's declaration that he would rather be right than President is a high-sounding and inspiring phrase, which may stampede a volatile audience, but in Washington the motto seems to be, "it is better to be wrong than lose your job."

The bill was written in the interest of those who exploit Uncle Reuben and the sop given him will not erase that conviction from his mind. To show the insincerity of many of the supporters of the bill I cite the following incident:

A lawyer came to see me in reference to the proposed duty on potash. He brought with him a brief containing about twenty thousand words.

"What are you going to do with that formidable document?" I asked him.

"I am going to read that to Senator Blank."

"No you're not," I assured him.

"And why not? It is the last word on the subject. I spent three months gathering my information and preparing my brief and can not allow the Senator to be deprived of the benefit of the arguments and facts contained herein." He was quite indignant about the matter.

"I quite understand that," I returned, "but you will not read that to Senator Blank for two reasons. First, he will not stay in one place long enough to permit you to complete your task. In

the second place, he would not know what you were talking about. So the best thing you can do is to put your brief carefully away in the family archives and when a friend visits you who wants a little entertainment read it to him."

"Well, what in the world am I to do?" he exclaimed, looking blankly at me. I could see that he was a stranger in Washington and that he could not know the thought here is all politically tinged and slanted and that ordinary arguments, even though supported by patent facts were entirely useless. They might work in a court of law; they may be effective before a school board or a board of directors of some great industrial concern, but in Washington you need something besides facts, and you are required to make a plea that has something in addition to admitted right and conceded justice to support it. I rather pitied his helplessness and decided to aid him.

"My friend," I said, "you go to Senator Blank, look him squarely in the eye and say to him:

" 'Senator, there are thousands of organized farmers in my State and they all want free potash. You are seeking reelection in the early future. What are you going to do about it?' "

The lawyer was greatly aggrieved because he couldn't read his brief to the statesman, but promised to do as I had recommended. A little later I saw him and he told me that he had carried out to the letter the counsel I had given him. The interview lasted about two minutes. When he made his statement the Senator rubbed his chin, coughed

delicately and said: "Well, then, I am for free potash."

He took the right course, not because he especially wanted to do so, but he feared that Uncle Reuben might discipline him when again he asks support for his candidacy for high office.

If I know anything about the temper and inclination of Uncle Reuben the special political decalogue will not be allowed to continue to hold the place of the Ten Commandments. The directions and inhibitions in that eternal law will not be set aside, even temporarily, if the farmers ever manage to reach the heart of the Capital and are able to maintain themselves there.

Uncle Reuben insists that Congress address itself seriously and candidly to the great task of righting rural wrongs and making it possible for those who feed and clothe the nations to retain enough of the fruits or the financial equivalent to feed, clothe and educate their families. Debt pyramiding must cease. The mountain must be made level with the plain.

CHAPTER XVI

Essentials for Successful Cooperation

Somebody has said that the common people never have, without the aid of an uncommon leader, accomplished anything worth while. They never have won a revolution, never have established a stable government, never created a dependable and wholly just tribunal. There is at least a segment of truth in this. Leadership is an absolute necessity. The Sans Cullotte of France would never have destroyed the Bastile without the guiding hands of great and uncommon men. Aristocracy itself, shocked at organized injustice, came down from its pedestal and helped the half naked and almost wholly starved people of France. Titled nobility inspired by a lofty sentiment of justice revolted against the grain-cornering policy which enriched the few while it brought want and misery to the many.

So it may be in this country—and I think it is so—that even in the ranks of privilege itself there can be found men and women who are ready to admit that the policy of special interest in relation to the farmers is all wrong. There are others who see that such a policy can not but prove destructive if permitted to run its course. The one is influenced by enlightened selfishness; the other is inspired by an indomitable sense of justice. The Sans Cullotte of France cooperated with Mirabeau

and LaFayette, scions of an ancient nobility, and it is just possible that the farmers of this country may be able to cooperate with men and women who have been for generations the pampered children of special privilege, but who in this age have seen a new light. It is as well, however, to examine with utmost minuteness the motives which prompt a desire on their part for a rapproachment with the primary producers of this country.

The Farmers' Union has not followed the line of least resistance. On the contrary, it has fought every inch of the way. Powerful influences, operating in the most subtle manner have attempted to absorb, cripple or destroy it. These have been resisted by the common sense of farmers and this opposition, while not completely overcome, has failed to retard the progress of the organization. To support my statement that the Farmers' Union has not succombed to the opposing forces from within and from without, I have only to say that eight thousand business concerns are operating under its authority. In Kansas alone the business done in a single year is expressed in the mammoth total of three hundred and fifty million dollars. In Nebraska the cooperative business, resulting in a great saving to farmers, was immense.

The total business done by business organizations chartered by the Farmers' Union last year was in excess of one billion five hundred million dollars. Almost every field was covered. Cooperative buying and selling on a scale never before attempted was achieved by this great self-help movement.

Manifestly, complete and final cooperation can not be established while farmers are dependent upon the money trust for its credit and the transportation trust to get its products to the final market.

Cooperation as far as it has gone has been productive of most excellent results, but, as I say, it is not complete. It does not yet complete the adjustment of the economic balance against the farmer. It has not yet eliminated all the wastes that should be eliminated or gotten for the farmer the full share of the consumer's dollar that should be his.

In the United States the Farmers' Union and self-help organizations own and operate some thing like 1,500 grain elevators. It is a source of amusement to me when I find a mushroom institution which does not own a mule team and is totally without experience starting out to unhorse the middleman and take over his duties. The years of preparation for so vast an undertaking that the Farmers' Union and other self-help organizations have made, more properly fit them for the work which a new concern may honestly desire should be done.

The fact should not be lost sight of that even though we may own all the grain elevators in the country we are not economically free as long as the finances, credit and transportation of the nation are in the hands of special interests. There are some cooperators who lose sight of the great end, aim and purpose of collective effort. They give it the soulless character of a system which is designed to save a few pennies here and a few dollars there. They think that if they can get more money for the

producers the whole purpose of cooperation has been achieved. This is a very limited and most unfortunate view of the whole subject. To get more money for the producer and a juster deal for the final consumer is a splendid accomplishment, but it is only one of the elements in cooperation. It is excellent as far as it goes and if it reached no higher nor spread over any greater area of the human soul it would still be worth while.

But there is something infinitely more appealing to my mind in this effort to get together than the salvage of a few hundred, a few thousand or a few million dollars. There should be fraternity in cooperation. Without it I am afraid that sooner or later the cooperatives will find themselves in an embarrassing position. Cooperation in spirit as well as in substance should be the motto of every farmer. There should be a knitting of heart, an establishment of inseparable concord. Then mutual confidence will take the place of mutual suspicion and the common cause will be embraced in a wholehearted, single-minded manner.

CHAPTER XVII

Stabilization

IN a statement issued about the middle of October, 1922, the President urged the farmers not to restrict production. He said in effect that it would be perilous to the nation to do so because the cost of living would be painfully enhanced and a shortage of food is at best a terrible thing to contemplate. In his statement the President held out hope of better things. He felt sure that price adjustments would come and that the farmers would be given more substantial rewards for their industry. He pointed out that restricted production is not a solution for the troubles of agriculture and that it would only tend to impoverish the farmers while augmenting the trials and troubles of the consumers.

The President is right from his viewpoint in the position he took. Nobody able to speak with any authority for Uncle Reuben has ever proposed that the nation be starved into submission and no forward-looking farm leader has ever been foolish enough to propose restricted production as a cure for the ills which afflict the industry of agriculture. On the contrary I believe that increased, not diminishing, production is what the world requires. To restrict production is to destroy wealth, as it were, before it is created.

But notwithstanding my own views on the sub-

ject and my disagreement under normal conditions with a policy of restricted agricultural effort, I have frankly advocated this very thing. I have advocated it not as a cure, nor even as a palliative, but as the only available and effective means of calling the indifferent country's attention to the peril of a waning agriculture and the disgust of millions of citizens with their calling. If the great affairs of the nation were properly managed and the farmers were assured decent wages I would urge every man to do his utmost to bring to maturity a superabundance of the fruits of the soil.

I regret to find in President Harding's protest against the policy of reduced production any suggestion of any plan by which such a method could be avoided. He says farmers should obtain more extended credit and I agree with him, but what they also want is a less niggardly distribution of cash among those who till the soil. The President does not propose, in short, any means by which the farmers may be encouraged to believe themselves warranted in putting forth a 100 per cent of effort. The Chief Executive is very clear as to what ought to be done to build up an American merchant marine, but he is extremely foggy on what ought to be done to build up and maintain American agriculture. To make an American merchant marine profitable to the private interests controlling it, Mr. Harding would place at their command the mighty aid of the Public Treasury. To make farming profitable he proposes an extension of credit. Fine as far as it goes, but something more must be done.

The farmers in some way must be assured the cost of production. They must be permitted to collect this. *How* is a matter of detail which the collective brain of this great nation ought to be able to determine. But before this can be done we must remove from the path of Uncle Reuben mountains of magnificent debris. We must remove the grain exchanges, the cotton exchanges, and all other agencies which collect the toll which properly belongs to the producers.

Naturally, the removal of these impediments to agricultural success would have to be succeeded by other agencies capable of doing essential work, but forbidden to collect for such service more than the actual cost of performing it. This means that the farmers must take possession of the means of marketing and distributing their own products. This is a dangerous doctrine to preach in a country so wedded to precedent, so attached to tradition, but it is the only cure for the evils that have afflicted both producer and consumer. I know I am proposing what many will term an impossibility, but everything is possible to faith. If a thing is right it *ought* to be done and if it ought to be done it *can* be done.

Yes, I believe that the primary producer, the man without whose service there would be no food, has the right to name a price for his product. He has this inherent right, but of course he has not the right to fix an abnormal and wholly unreasonable price, such a price as only the rich can pay. Surely I agree with the proposal that no association of

farmers has the right to rob the public and force from the consumers a toll that would impoverish them. Such a policy would soon end cooperation.

The way to end grain and cotton gambling is for the growers to withhold from the gamblers the stakes with which they play. Take the stakes away from them and there will be no game, but so long as they are permitted to collect the stakes they will gamble and the farmer and his customer will pay all the percentages. They will be taxed to finance all the sure things, all the the trickeries and all the vagaries of the great sport. They will cover all margins, swallow all losses, but collect none of the profits.

Now let us, as a great nation and a great people, show that we can do something that is not predigested and sanctified by tradition and precedent, nor even glorified by the fathers. Let us show that we can crash through obstacles of seniority and "fixed principles." A principle is badly fixed if it impedes our progress along the path to economic liberty.

It is marvelous how time mellows what really is a glaring injustice and a palpable fraud. I am not criticising men only in so far as they allow themselves to be seen as the embodiment of wrong systems. But here it is necessary to call attention to a proposal recently made by Julius Barnes, who was president of the United States Grain Corporation during the war. Mr. Barnes says, with every appearance of sincerity, with every evidence that he really believes in his own suggestion, that a Judge

Landis should be appointed to see fair play on the grain exchanges and the cotton exchanges. In other words, such a magnate would perform the palatable duty of declaring to the gamblers at various stages of the game just what he believed ought to be a reasonable rakeoff.

It is all very well to have a great national figure to umpire baseball and another imperial American to see that the movies do not become morally distasteful. These things are not in themselves fundamentally wrong. They are national amusements which people can patronize or not just as they see fit. But all MUST have bread. Now it is proposed that a Judge Landis or a Will Hays be given the power to tell a superfluous, if not a parasitical agency just how much of the farmers' wheat and the consumers' bread and cotton it may appropriate. The proposal has the merit of novelty at least and coming from such a source it is not entirely without value. It certainly points unerringly to the fact that even in the highest circles grain gambling is a recognized though necessary evil. The farmers insist that the evil is not necessary, but they know it can not be eliminated until they themselves through agencies of their own choosing, do their own marketing and their own distributing.

Uncle Reuben, as his own stock exchange, would certainly be a novelty. But what about the puts and calls, the bears and the bulls, the immense intricate and costly paraphernalia and impedimentia which make up the equipment of these great gambling concerns? Are you going to scrap these?

Certainly we are. Of what earthly use are they to society? What service of merit do they perform? Two men were recently sent to jail for six months each for running a gambling house within a few miles of the city of Washington. At most, they only managed to collect a few thousand dollars from their dupes, but the great grain and cotton gambling houses separate the farmers from scores of millions of dollars annually. But they are purified by time and sanctified by tradition.

Now let us see if there is anything essentially wrong with the proposal that farmers in concert name prices for their commodities. To determine this question it might be as well to see what the custom of industry in relation to this suggestion is. We find that the Standard Oil Company fixes the price of gasoline, crude oil and many other lubricants. It also names the price for which parowax and other by-products can be obtained by the public. It is claimed that the directors are influenced in their action by the fluctuating costs of production, and although stock in the company can not be acquired except at an enormous premium and melons of immense magnitude are frequently cut, it is contended that prices are so fixed that not more than a reasonable margin of profit remains. For the sake of argument, I will agree that this is an accurate statement, though I reserve the right to revise my findings. This great concern is able to control prices and at the same time so conduct itself as to keep within the provisions of the anti-trust laws.

Nobody at all acquainted with the matter would

for a moment deny to Elbert Gary, chairman of the board of directors of the United States Steel Corporation the power to name the price at which steel can be bought by the users of that commodity. Nor does anybody think that Judge Gary would be so unmindful of the trust reposed in him by the stockholders as to propose prices which would not leave a good margin for the payment of dividends. At any rate he has not, so far, blundered to the disadvantage of the owners of that giant corporation. Shortly after the war, when it was decided to reduce the price of steel, the authoritative word had to come from Judge Gary. Right here is a good place to remind the reader that though the United States Steel Corporation is an industrial Titan, the hen that clucks around the barnyard produces more wealth in a year than does this colossal institution. Nobody has so far thought of suggesting that somebody endowed with authority from the poultry raisers of the country to fix prices be employed for that purpose.

The uniform prices charged for lumber point unerringly to the fact that competition in that business has virtually been eliminated and that agreements have been reached to charge rates that will be certain to leave for the dealers a profit which at least justifies them in continuing in the business. Steamship companies fix freight rates and the railway companies are permitted to charge tolls which will produce a fair return on the invested capital. The street railway corporations, the gas companies, and the lighting companies are allowed by the com-

munities which charter them to collect fares and toll, from which they can take funds sufficient to pay good salaries and also take care of their stockholders. The coal barons charge all the traffic will bear, showing a complete disregard for public rights.

Interest and discount rates are fixed by the bankers. The laws of these organizations are as fixed and immutable as the statutes of the Medes and Persians. It is true that states may pass usury laws, governments may enact measures of protection, but the fact remains that the terms of those who hold the money chest must be met or the supply disappears. When these industries, institutions and organizations are able, without embarrassing interference, to name the price for their respective commodities, why should the farmer who insists on the same privilege be regarded as guilty of an offense involving moral turpitude?

It is vehemently denied that the guarantee feature of the Cummins-Esch law is still operative, but I call attention to the fact that under this transportation act the Interstate Commerce Commission is authorized to allow rates which will produce for the roads a fair margin of profit on the capital invested in them. Nearly every business, except agriculture, which may be rightly regarded as a public utility, is assured against the evils of fluctuating markets. Competition is eliminated. Where more than one concern is engaged in directing the same kind of enterprise, an arrangement mutually agreeable is made and none suffers a loss. This is well illus-

trated in the traction question in Washington, and at the same time furnishes a demonstration of the feebleness of Congress as that body so often presents itself to the public.

In the Capital City of the nation there are two street railway concerns, one known as the Capital Traction Company and the other as the Washington Railway and Electric Company. The latter says it must have an eight cent fare in order to pay 6 per cent on a fair valuation of its property while the other can get along well on a five and one-half cent fare. But the Public Utilities Commission insists that there should be no discrimination in its treatment of the two companies; therefore it permits one company to collect about 15 per cent in order to allow the other to obtain 6 per cent. The equipment of the Washington Railway and Electric Company is very inferior to that of its competitor, but big salaries must be paid to its officers and reasonable dividends must be disbursed to its stockholders.

Congress and the municipal governments of this nation are quite certain that it is an evil thing to squeeze the value out of stocks and bonds of public utility corporations. It is unwise to have in operation a concern of any magnitude which is not paying dividends. It is perilous to have these concerns in such a condition that a receivership ought and must be applied for.

Therefore, in the interests of business safety and public stability, the people must submit to a reasonable amount of gouging. If the management has

been extravagant, loose or inefficient, the stockholders must not be permitted to suffer. The banks which hold the bonds or have loaned money on blocks of stock must be protected. The dear people should be lenient in their judgment and still more lenient in their demands. If the railways are unable to pay excessive salaries on the rates collected, then the users of them must submit to an increase in toll. True, the people who pay the big salaries, who provide the freight for the railways to carry and who are compelled, either to meet the schedules or dispense with the service, have nothing to say about the management. Alfred Thom, the astute, resourceful, alert and ever-watchful general counsel for the Association of Railway Executives has long since convinced the powers that be that how the railways are conducted is none of the public's business. He has also convinced the same exalted powers that when a railway needs money it is the duty of the people to provide it.

This is a beautiful arrangement. No need to worry about the future. Grain may sink in value to the zero point, hogs may be sold at four cents a pound, beef on the hoof may descend to three cents a pound; no matter, the people must have these things and the railways must carry them and if the railways carry them they must be paid for the service a sum which will leave a margin sufficient to pay enormous salaries and "reasonable" dividends. What a pity the sturdy, rugged, and economical farmers of the country didn't build railways! They could easily have constructed a transcontinental line

or two with the money they have lost during the past few years, and you may be sure the roads would not have been permitted to lose cash. This is not an assault on the railways. I am simply trying to drive home the contrast between the treatment accorded a public utility and that given an absolute public necessity.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Farmer in High Office

THOUGH it is difficult to find a public man in Washington who will not insist on having himself regarded as a "farmer," investigation discloses that there are probably not more than a dozen men holding executive or legislative positions at the National Capital who can qualify as tillers of the soil. This is an extremely liberal estimate. Some investigators say that, measured by an honest definition of the term "dirt farmer," not a half dozen such citizens can be counted in the National House of Representatives, fewer in the Senate, none in the Cabinet, and none associated in any responsible way with any board, bureau, commission or division of Government.

This is a sad comment on the apathy of Uncle Reuben. It is a standing rebuke to rural indifference to political responsibility and discloses the truth that farmers are totally unfamiliar with their own power. If I am asked how farmers are to obtain places of power at the fountainhead of American Government, I boldly reply they should take them. They represent about 38 per cent of the voting strength of the nation; have in their hands considerably more than one-fourth of its wealth and nobody will deny that they at least average up with the rest of the country in intelligence. The records show that they are law-abiding, honest and

thrifty. Measured by any standard, they are fully entitled to at least one-third of the offices in Washington.

It would be difficult to name an office which could not efficiently be filled by a farmer. But the country has become habituated to the thought that Uncle Reuben is well enough in his own sphere and that it would be perilous to put him in a position of public responsibility. The damning effect of such a doctrine is seen in the apparent indifference of the farmers to their own rights. The recent elections, however, furnished substantial and very encouraging evidence of the fact that agrarian America is beginning to awake to the fact that it has power to right its own wrongs. Certainly those entrenched in office and power will not voluntarily retire in order to make room for the original producers. They will hold on until compelled by force to surrender. I mean, of course, the force of public opinion as expressing itself through the ballot.

The President, I am sure, is quite convinced that he has really appointed farmers to some very important posts. It is generally believed that when he invited D. R. Crissinger to assume the office of Comptroller of the Currency he took a farmer into the Administration. If the acquisition of a farm is all that is needed to make a farmer of a citizen then Mr. Crissinger might well claim that he has been initiated into the great association of tillers of American soil. But on the same basis J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Elbert Gary, Secretary of the Treasury Mellon and many others

could properly call themselves farmers. Many Congressmen and United States Senators who have accumulated what wealth they have through the practice of law or medicine or by engaging in commerce could write themselves down as farmers if to be a farmer it is only necessary to own some tillable land. The man who is able to declare himself to be a farmer must show that he is engaged personally in that occupation. He can not make good his claim by becoming an absentee landlord, even though all his revenue should come from the soil. He must show that by sympathy, inclination, and environment he is really a farmer. Lots of men who own farms also are bankers. In nearly all such cases agriculture with them is subordinate. So they must be classified as bankers. They are interested first in loaning money and collecting dividends. The farm is an incidental matter. It is not their major consideration. Many so-called agricultural leaders have only a speaking acquaintance with Uncle Reuben. They manipulate, but do not lead. They control, but do not direct.

I am aware also it has been said that a farmer has been placed on the Interstate Commerce Commission. I declare if such be the case I am unable to identify him. It may be, however, that a majority of the membership of that body own some land and perhaps derive some income from the products of their property. But they are not, in the broad sense, farmers.

There is not a farmer on the Federal Farm Loan Board. On a commission of this kind farmers, men

with the full farm viewpoint, should dominate. It never occurred to this or the preceding Administration that any but lawyers and financiers could administer with success so important a bureau of Government. Created especially to serve the farmers, we find that they have been rigidly excluded from participation in the proceedings of the board. It may be that some member who owns a farm, or has loaned money on land, will declare that he at least is a farmer. But investigation fails to disclose that any member had chosen agriculture as his exclusive or main occupation.

We look in vain among the membership of the Federal Trade Commission for the gentleman who can convincingly declare himself to be a farmer, and beginning with the Secretary of Agriculture and going through the line of Administration chiefs it is difficult to lay one's hand upon the shoulder of a citizen who can convince Uncle Reuben that he is really a farmer. I am aware that technicians from agricultural colleges; chemists who have made extended studies of soils and their compounds; experts on hog cholera and the boll weevil, and many other eminent men who have spent a part of their lives on farms are associated with the department. It is difficult, however, to concede that they can qualify as farmers. They know little or nothing of real farm life and all it comprehends and portends and their acquaintance with farm problems is superficial at best.

Making a rough and perhaps liberal guess, I should say there are about four hundred thousand lawyers in the United States. From these we find

that more than 80 per cent of the membership of both branches of the National Congress are selected. More than forty million persons own, operate or derive their living from the farms of the United States and not more than a half score of these have seats in Congress. The legal profession has a preponderating influence on all boards and commissions. Of course, I know it is thought by many of our people that to make laws we must have lawyers and to administer them we must employ the same kind of talent.

One of the evil results of an almost total absence of farmers from the official life of Washington is found in the fact that the President receives a good deal of misleading and sometimes even grotesque advice regarding legislative and administrative acts in which the tiller of the soil plays a part.

Before he was elected, the present Chief Executive sought association with the "best minds" of the nation and among these he selected Henry Wallace. Now, Henry Wallace is well meaning and wanted to serve his party and his country. He believed himself to be well qualified to direct the activities of the Department of Agriculture and so did the President. But Henry Wallace made a fatal blunder when he advised Mr. Harding that the Farm Bureau Federation was the coming giant, the one great institution which would lead agriculture out of the wilderness into the promised land. He took his chief on a lofty hill and invited him to view the land over which the forces of the new organization were marching, and this led the then Senator Harding, in a speech at St. Paul, to say

something about a Titan that had arisen in the corn belt.

Henry was perfectly honest in the advice he gave the President. He didn't mean to, but he fooled the President just the same. Before fooling his chief he fooled himself or allowed somebody or something to fool him. It is a human infirmity to mistake noise for achievement and claptrap for argument.

If the farmers had seized their rights and taken their proper place in the Government of the United States, the incoming President might have been more accurately advised regarding the real sentiment of the farmers of the United States and through what agencies they, in a year or two later, would give expression to their convictions.

If the farmers will take what really belongs to them in power and influence agricultural policies will be formulated BY, not FOR them. Self-government to be effective and just must be the kind of government in which all elements effectively participate. With more than one-third of the citizenship of the United States excluded, self-government becomes a farce and a mockery. Reforms must be effected by farmers, not for them. Other elements, inspired by a sense of justice could help, but Uncle Reuben must seize a place on the quarter-deck of the Ship of State. He must be among those who direct and not be relegated to an obscure position among the directed. If he is to submit to government he must also govern. But he will not be GIVEN. He must TAKE.

CHAPTER XIX

Early Political Action

THE Farmers' Union came into being about twenty years ago. Its purpose was educational. The founders had determined to get into the mind of the farmers all over the country some idea of their strength when intelligently and collectively exerted. We didn't go into politics but were quite willing to take political action when we deemed it advisable to do so.

Acting on this principle we seated and unseated Members of Congress, members of State legislatures and others. We went into business and from the start achieved success. We sought the great in their seats at Washington. At first we were repelled. The chairman of the Committee on Agriculture thought it wasn't worth his time to receive us and give us a hearing on the anti-cotton gambling bill which we were supporting.

But soon we started a campaign of letter writing. Farmers with their own hands, more used to guiding the plow than the pen, wrote letters. Some of them were not constructed according to the rules of modern grammar, some of the chirography was faulty, many of the expressions crude. But they all breathed a demand that an honest man had a right to make to those who were professing to serve him in Congress.

In those days the propagandist was in his in-

fancy. Lobbying had not been systematized and the great interests had not fully developed the modern art of throwing up a smoke screen between the Congressman in Washington and his constituents in Kansas or some other remote State. In other words, public opinion, as it functioned among the millions of our countrymen, still had a chance to make itself felt in the National Capital.

Today public opinion ends at the District Line. When you reach Washington you find already prepared for you a special and privately manufactured opinion which Congress is prone to accept as the judgment of the masses whom the members of each House are presumed to be serving.

The manufacture of public opinion for special use by Washington is one of the achievements of the day. In its way it is a surpassingly wonderful accomplishment. Those who direct this new and modern industry are amazingly alert and resourceful.

Before this new industry was established in Washington the people of the country had some chance to correctly inform their public servants as to the condition of public opinion. Now, however, the average Congressman and Senator are bewildered. Their mail is choked by volumes of well and powerfully written disquisitions on almost every matter which might, could, would or should be a subject of legislation.

The man or the interest having the most money to spend for propaganda, providing it is directed with becoming skill, is able, invariably, to sell

"public opinion." The only way a Congressman can protect himself against this spuriously created "public opinion" is to refuse to read his mail, and many of them have, in self-defense, adopted this policy.

I started to say that the farmers, whose leaders had been scorned at Washington, compelled by the adoption of an epistolatory campaign, respect for their wishes. They got their hearing, but at that time got little else. Anyway it was a start. Timidly, deferentially, but resolutely the farmers approached the legislative throne, made their demands and retired.

But it too often happens that when Uncle Reuben has been made the recipient of notice by official Washington, he believes he has won his cause. Experience has demonstrated that when a committee consents to hear him, he has only been given an evanescent view of the promised land. The milk and honey are still far, far away and he might travel through the wilderness in search of his objective for forty times forty years unless, with stern and determined resolution, he follows up the initial advantage. The farmer should never retire. If he fails to reach his objective he should at least try to take a trench and then prepare to take another and another until he has forced legislative, executive and administrative Washington to do him full and complete justice.

Uncle Reuben found the cards stacked against him on the parcel post, but fortunately for the people, the great express companies through their

arrogance, their greed, their embezzlement of power and their insolent inefficiency, had succeeded in driving a great majority of the people of this country into our camp.

The express companies had for years mauled and manhandled their customers, charging excessive rates for inferior service and bringing many millions of unearned dividends into their respective treasuries. Paying fabulous salaries to their executive officers and immense dividends to their preferred stockholders by taking immense and unrighteous toll from their customers, the express companies had at last exhausted the patience of the people.

The apologists for these organizations banked on the innate conservatism of the American people to save them from "ruinous" competition with the United States Government. The sentiment "more business in Government and less Government in business" had not then been coined. Like "back to normalcy" it was one of the literary treats held in store for the edification of another generation.

But the express companies were quite sure that the sense of justice fortunately so common to the American people would restrain them from perpetrating the "monstrous injustice" of "driving into bankruptcy a perfectly legitimate enterprise whose only fault was that it served the people of the United States with extraordinary efficiency and fidelity." But tears were of no avail and threats of injury to the whole carrying trade of the country did not help their cause. Members of both

Houses of Congress, who feared both the people and the assistant government, consented to a compromise which limited the field of the Government to parcels of comparatively meager size and zoned the operations of the parcel post system. Improvements have been effected since then. The weight of packages which may be carried under the jurisdiction of the Postoffice Department has been much increased.

The express companies have not died, their stock has not wilted in value, their fortunes have not shriveled and their dividends have not suffered any serious impairment. The parcel post system has not "socialized" the Government, nor has it adversely affected private initiative. The challenge of the monopolistic express companies to the public to compete, if they dare, with them, has successfully been met and the Government still lives.

In the days when we fought for the parcel post the lobby had not reached its zenith. It was still in process of formation. Its sublime mission had not been fully comprehended even by its founders and its capacity for benevolent intrigue was necessarily limited. There never was a lobby which did not succeed in making itself believe that it was serving the real interests of the dear people. Even when it committed grand larceny it was quite convinced that it stole within the law and took from the people only that which was no good to them anyhow.

In the establishment of the parcel post, in the creation of the rural free delivery system, in the general adoption of the Australian ballot system

and in the acceptance by so many States of the direct primary principle, we see evidence of the power of the farmers of this land to win for themselves and their country mighty victories against tyranny, oppression, injustice and organized fraud.

In view of these mighty achievements is there a farmer who will dare to say that gambling in grain and cotton can not be destroyed; that inordinate speculation in the people's food can not be outlawed; that the loan shark, who chooses agriculture as the field for his nefarious operations, can not be overthrown and that, in short, everything which subverts the constitutional guarantee of equal rights to all and special privileges to none can not be driven from the borders of this great land?

CHAPTER XX

Cooperation as Big Business Sees It

EXPERIENCE illuminating and sometimes bitter has taught me the futility of attempting to solve farm problems through cooperation exclusivley with the big interests of the nation. I am personally acquainted with great numbers of the industrial and financial giants. They are amiable and in many cases even lovable citizens. They would not speak harshly to a servant, would scorn to be guilty of an act of cruelty to a child and would be courteous and deferential in the presence of women. But they live in their own world, are controlled and directed by desires exclusively their own and are the slaves of customs for which they and their fathers are responsible.

They have asked us to cooperate, but the fundamental objection to that is they know nothing of cooperation themselves. They know something of combination, of association for mutual advantage, of alliances for the good of a limited number, but cooperation is a field wholly foreign to them. They are fully acquainted with the methods of amalgamation and consolidation, but while part of the combine they are each playing a lone hand. They are in the combine first and foremost to help themselves and if the amalgamation can be unscrambled with advantage to themselves they would readily assent to its dismemberment.

Their education has taught them that men must before all things take care of themselves. If this

can not be done through exclusive and independent action or enterprise then it must be done through partnerships and associations.

I am not going to perpetrate the foolish injustice of attributing to all men of affairs in the cities, who want to cooperate with the farmers, base or unworthy motives. On the contrary many of these gentlemen are inspired with lofty impulses. They really desire a cessation of hostilities between the farmers and those who distribute their products or finance their operations. They would be happy if they could bring to pass that joyful condition of mind and heart which would make possible complete union of effort between all elements in society for the betterment of citizenship generally. Unfortunately, however, there appears to be a great gulf between the farmers and those citizens who direct the great urban affairs of the country, and the gulf is apparently impassable. At least it will be impassable until the viewpoint of the city magnate undergoes a radical change.

There is a very general and very genuine desire on the part of men everywhere to get together, but they are hampered and handicapped by fundamental ignorance not alone of farm problems, but of the farmer himself who is the major part of every problem which concerns his occupation. The city magnate has proceeded with methods so well known to him to cooperate with the farmer, but it seems never to have occurred to him that he also needs to be cooperated.

The captain of industry is not in the habit of following. He leads, directs, controls and commands.

He sits at his desk and from there by medium of the telegraph, the telephone, the radio or other quick processes gives orders which must be obeyed. It is hard for him to understand that every humble farmer has an individuality which refuses to surrender itself even at the behest of a man whose success has crowned him king of his own industry. Hence the efforts of the urban industrial baron to cooperate with the man who, though far from opulent, is nevertheless king in his own limited and perhaps mortgaged domain are too often doomed to failure.

It is not in the nature of the farmer to concede to successful finance, commerce or industry the right to "cooperate" agriculture. This may be because of the consciousness that though he may be a small man in his industry he is indispensable, and there would be no kings of industry were there no devotees at the shrine of husbandry. At any rate, whatever be the cause, so far practically every attempt by industry, finance and commerce to cooperate with agriculture has failed.

It may be suggested that an attempt by agriculture to cooperate with urban energy would at least be worth while. The case is not hopeless until the patient is dead. My meaning is perhaps best illustrated by an experience I had a few years ago in New York. A collection of gentlemen, all of whom have an honorable place in American history, urged me to attend a dinner. The invitation was wired me by Seth Low, former Mayor of the Empire City of the nation. He and his associates wanted to discuss with me the problems of agricul-

ture and undoubtedly desired to be enlightened as to the best means of bringing about cooperation between business as it is directed from private offices in city skyscrapers and industry as it is controlled from the broad acres of the country's out-of-doors. The gentlemen associated with Mr. Low in the plan to have the writer tell how we may all come together were unquestionably as sincere as he in their endeavor to get the truth.

I found that I was unable to get to New York at the time indicated, and I so informed Mr. Low. I told him also that if I were to be the guest of himself and his distinguished associates at any future function I must be the program, the whole program; the works, the whole works; the cheese, the whole cheese. I attached this condition because I was the representative of an industry which made possible the existence of every other business that would be in evidence at the gathering. As the servant of an institution which provided the very meal of which I was invited to partake, I felt that Uncle Reuben, through my humble self, should be given the place of first distinction at the dinner.

Mr. Low, who had a keen sense of humor, was quick to respond that if I would attend a dinner as the guest of his associates and himself on a day mentioned, I would be the program, the whole program; the works, the whole works; the cheese, the whole cheese. And so the event was arranged. It was to be the tribute of enormous wealth, magnificent genius and immense achievement in many lines of urban endeavor to Uncle Reuben. It was to be

an acknowledgment of the indispensability of agriculture, a concerted admission that it was the greatest of all institutions.

We met at a great table in one of the most magnificent club rooms in Gotham. Millionaires were commonplace beside the guest they had come to honor. All bowed low, at least metaphorically, to the man whom they were pleased to regard as the human symbol of a mighty utility. For the moment they consented to see in this humble writer the hope of the world. I was certainly for the time the biggest dog among that great collection of thoroughbreds.

The chairman announced that none but myself would be permitted to talk. I was surrounded by a galaxy of intellect the like of which seldom assembles in one room. There was John Hays Hammond, and there was Henry P. Davidson, Judge Alton B. Parker and a number of others representing luxury, opulence and finance. They had come, they said, to get acquainted with Uncle Reuben through the man who had been selected as their spokesman. Oh, they knew so well that there was nobody on earth, above the earth, under the earth or in the sea that was the equal of the man who followed the plow.

It was grand, but at the same time simple. The coming together of two nationally indispensable forces had been achieved. Harmony had been completely established. The beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount had at least found a company of rich admirers. I arose to speak. The audience listened

intently. A pin dropping on the floor would have made a loud sound in the midst of that appreciative silence. I was getting along nicely, when all of a sudden I stopped. I cut a sentence in half and then joined in the general silence. When our mute attitude became a little embarrassing a gentleman arose and said:

"Mr. Barrett, we are just wondering what you are thinking about."

Then I replied:

"I was just wondering what in the world you fellows want with me." I proceeded to the end of my speech. It was well received. I was complimented, congratulated, my back slapped by enthusiastic millionaire listeners who felicitated themselves on the fact that at least they had become acquainted through an authoritative source with the farm mind.

Cooperation, not amalgamation or consolidation, would forthwith be established. All hard feelings—in fact, all the means that have contributed to keep loving hearts apart, would henceforth be removed and we would travel onward arm in arm plucking in unison the finest grapes from God's vineyard. Ah, how lovely it all sounded. How simple the thing all appeared. These men who in their offices are unapproachable except by persons for whom they have sent, were affable, agreeable, natural and buoyant. There was apparently no affectation. They were all returning to the simple life. All looked very simple. I could detect no design. Everything was open and aboveboard. At the din-

ner I was not asked for any favors. I was not requested to use what power or influence I might have in the interests of anybody present. The meeting resolved itself into its component human parts. I had moved down the stairway in the direction of the street.

I had stepped to the stairway and was about to descend when a gentleman accosted me. He was pleasant and sincere. Unquestionably he believed that I also was sincere and entirely willing to do what appeared to him to be an obvious duty, but which to my way of thinking would have been a crime against the opinions which I held and a betrayal of the faith that the Farmers' Union had reposed in me.

"Barrett," he said, "I would like you to stop off on your way back to Georgia and stop some of this damned radical legislation. We especially want you to kill the La Follette Seaman act."

For a moment I was amazed. This man believed he was asking me to do something which fully accorded with my views. He thought the great magnates at that dinner had succeeded in cooperating me and it never occurred to him that what he urged me to do would have been resented by the organization which had so completely trusted me and so signally honored me. His total ignorance of the mind of Uncle Reuben was to me pathetic.

Therefore, while giving friendly encouragement to all honest efforts to establish cooperation, it is as well for the tiller of the soil to play safe by continuing his efforts to work out his own salvation.

CHAPTER XXI

A Tragic Glimpse of the Promised Land

NEARLY everybody who is anybody has tried to help the farmer. All have moved toward Uncle Reuben with an apparently sincere purpose to give him just the aid he needs.

He has more friends and fewer enemies—on the surface—than any other individual in the United States. Great sermons have been preached about him. His service to mankind in tilling the soil and bringing forth sustenance has been expatiated upon from every rostrum in the United States. There is not a politician anywhere, whether he be merely a register of deeds in a sparcely settled county, or Chief Executive of this great nation, who has not proven by his words that he is a friend of the farmer. There is not a railway magnate, a steel king, an oil emperor or a lumber despot who has not repeatedly said the farmer is the salt of the earth, and all these have had plans for the solution of his problems.

But setting aside the superficialities of the politician, the interested friendship of some of the business men, scores of thousands of persons inspired by the best of motives have made common cause with the farmer and have offered to help him. They have gone to his farm and conversed with him while he has been cultivating or plowing the land and have most earnestly shown him how his condition

might be improved if only he would adopt a plan which they had been kind enough to make for him.

They have seen him at his conventions, in his locals, at his country elevator and wherever he might happen to be, and they have always urged him to accept their proposals for his betterment. But after spending weeks, months and even years sincerely trying to help the farmer, these good souls have given up in disgust their self-imposed missions and have joined in the general verdict of disappointed men and women that it is useless to attempt to help the farmer because he refuses to be assisted. Some attribute this to an almost total lack of common sense, while others say it is mulish obstinacy, the result of too big a trade in gold bricks.

It is perhaps a waste of time and space to attempt to tell just why these well-meaning presons have failed to help the farmer. It is not because the farmer has no confidence in his urban brother. He has been a follower since the dawn of history. He has followed the city leader faithfully and enthusiastically. But the men or women fresh from the city who want to help the farmer do not come equipped with a knowledge of rural fundamentals and they certainly are almost wholly destitute of an understanding of the man whom they are dealing with.

You may deal with a farmer as a Democrat or Republican and obtain his immediate assent to your views. But to deal with him first and foremost as a farmer you find yourself in an entirely new field.

To begin with, he knows farming and he knows that the city man or woman does not know it, hence an intangible barrier is immediately placed between the self-appointed economic philanthropist and himself. But though this barrier can not be identified even by himself, it is invulnerable. It can neither be removed, scaled, nor blown away.

Moreover, the average urbanite who is honestly seeking to aid the farmer begins by attempting to get his mind over to the tiller of the soil, instead of getting OUT of the mind of the ruralist and into his own what is there. A failure to understand or identify farm psychology makes agreement between unbanite and the ruralist impossible. This is a fact that those who fail to help the farmer seldom or never recognize. A plan may be flawless. It may be in every way workable. It may have the approval of the best minds and be scientifically unassailable, but if it lacks that intangible appeal so necessary in dealing with farmers it will fail utterly.

The farmer wants to be helped and the way to help him is to let him help himself. But he cannot help himself while insuperable obstacles block his way. And perhaps a subconsciousness of the fact that the very people who want to help him have not addressed themselves to the greater task of removing obstacles from his path has made him unresponsive to their advances.

Another reason for the failure of the honest urban resident to pursue a successful mission with the farmer is the fact that they go to him as a

teacher rather than as a pupil. To be of any use to the farmer they must begin by LEARNING of him and not by attempting to TEACH him. And after they have learned of him they may prove to be of very great value to each other. Understanding of the man with whom you want to cooperate is an absolute prerequisite to success.

To make myself clear it is necessary that I call attention to the meteoric career of the Farm Bureau Federation. This organization came into being to the accompaniment of ringing of bells, sounding of cymbals and all the noise, clatter and enthusiasm which herald the approach of a conquering monarch. Indeed, it was the clear intention of their organization to effect a nation-wide conquest. It was a gormand which had determined to swallow everything that got in its way. It had clearly resolved that it would be the only farm organization which would be armed with authority to speak for the tillers of the soil. It had money, brains and energy, the trinity which is supposed to be irresistible.

Great men flocked to its standard. Banks and bankers, financiers of international repute, big packing and distributing associations, industrial magnates, transportation giants and politicians of all grades and degrades lovingly embraced it. These kings in their respective domains were ready to welcome the monarch of another sphere and cooperate with him in preventing the nation from becoming radical or sinking into the slough of bolshevism. This new and virile farm organization,

whose leaders could smoke three for a dollar cigars, live at the finest hostelries ever built by a DuPont and bedeck themselves so that the most ardent devotee of the satorial art might envy them, offered opportunity for cooperation which the interests could not allow to pass by.

Moreover, it immediately became a quasi-government agency. The money of the taxpayers of the United States was used to finance some of its essential activities. The county agent, whom we all believed was employed to serve agriculture and not a section of agriculture, immediately became in a very real sense the employee of this new and well-financed organization. And why not? Men who adorn their heads with the silken tile of respectability were the kind of fellows for the county agent to follow and obey.

Then presidents of agricultural colleges, which were financed either in whole or part by the taxpayers of the States and of the nation, became ardent champions of this new movement. They left their theoretical desks to do the practical work of boosting the institution which had come up like a mushroom. It may be that the Department of Agriculture did not know its employees who were selected to serve all the farmers were drawing pay from the public treasure chest and at the same time using their energy and influence to make more secure the standing of a special organization. But if this is so, the department must have allowed something or somebody to fit on its head a pair of opaque and impenetrable blinds.

By making the most liberal use of brains, energy and money the new organization promised to free agriculture from economic thraldom. The blissfully innocent leaders thought that this could be done by establishing an understanding with the men who profit most through the misfortunes of the farmers.

Their sweet, confiding nature was made manifest in their expressed belief that the great financier who manipulates credits and contracts or expands the currency at will was prepared to surrender some of his power and much of his profits, so they decided to cooperate with him.

It was a sublime picture. Those who had sinned were going to sin no more; those who had oppressed were ready to unite with citizens who would uplift; those who had taken the birthright of the farmer through various processes of manipulation or fake legislation, had seen the error of their ways and were ready to cooperate with their victims. Those who had taken 87 per cent were ashamed of such a transaction, and while not promising to make restitution, were willing to bring forth fruits meet for repentance by stealing on a mild scale, if at all, in the future.

It didn't appear to matter what were the antecedents of the men and corporations with which the new organization sought cordial relations. The really important thing was that they were ready to aid the newly proclaimed agricultural Moses. That the farm Moses did not ask these men and interests

to serve a probationary period as penitents and in that period demonstrate their sincerity, constitutes one of the finest tributes man can pay to his erring brother.

This spontaneous acceptance by the new farm leaders of an assurance of better dealings from those who had systematically plundered agriculture makes one wonder if after all the Millenium, when all men will be brothers, is not actually with us. Unfortunately, there exist men and even women in this country who question the motives of the railway executives, the packers, the controllers of finance and credit, and the masters of distribution in snuggling up so closely to the leaders of the organization now under discussion.

These doubting Thomases and critical Marys actually aver that the big interests in seeking an alliance with a farm organization plan to direct its energies and manipulate its policies. Color seems to be given to these suggestions by the fact that whenever this organization brings into being a new proposal, somebody eminent in the financial, transportation or marketing world seems to be in the center of the picture.

Perhaps, however, this is necessary because somebody must stand between the crude farmer and the discriminating public. If the new organization can dress its show windows with great national personalities it will unquestionably attract national notice. A little experimenting with the public has shown this to be a fact.

It was a magnificent arrangement for whatever party may be in power because being a quasi-governmental institution it was naturally estopped from criticizing the President or any member of the Administration. So if this new organization should, by any chance or any design, absorb all associations of farmers, no Government, no matter of what political complexion would ever be embarrassed by agricultural criticism. The county agent, upon whom the local organizations depend for their membership, would never be guilty of the impropriety of criticizing the Secretary of Agriculture or any bureau or administrator operating under his direction.

The presidents and professors in agricultural colleges, who are loyally attached to this new institution and who hold their places largely by grace of the United States Government, certainly would never, never raise their voices in criticism of any man holding any responsible place in the administration. This is the kind of cooperation that ought to be in the highest degree acceptable to statesmen who fear the adverse voice of the united farmers of America.

If the farmers of America can be taken off the neck of Congress, there are some men in that body who would restate their position on the important questions of the day.

No longer hampered or restrained by a critical rural sentiment they could so shape their course as to make it agreeable to their real inclinations. But the trinity of money, brains, and energy, which this

novel organization has been blessed with from its infancy, is apparently unable to achieve the immolation or retirement of the self-help agricultural institutions. In every other business this triune worldly deity seems to be invincible, but when applied to agriculture it suffers a humiliating breakdown.

The Farm Bureau was foredoomed to failure. But no one could expect that this would occur in so short a time. Advertised, heralded, proclaimed, extolled as the endowed creature of agricultural uplift with an avowed remedy for every ill, an amalgamator of producers, consumers, distributors, financiers and industrial leaders, the entire country was given the impression that at last Uncle Reuben was under a leadership and working on a plan to alleviate the agricultural ills. The harm resulting can never be measured or even estimated. Disappointments among the farmers themselves can not be much greater than the disappointments among all classes and callings in thinking that the farmer is too stolid or too dense to accept a promised remedy for his troubles.

This universal disappointment reaches to the grave point of disgust. And what is still more harmful is the fact that the farmers through their disappointment and disgust will have their suspicions increased, their trust and hope shaken and will be harder in the future to get aligned and properly organized into real farmer organization.

Advertised and broadcasted as no movement in the agricultural history of the country has ever

been, the Farm Bureau naturally will continue as a name for a while and color the landscape of purposeful farmer organizations. But it is an empty sound which can only leave the people sore of heart. Time alone may cover up the scars.

CHAPTER XXII

Organizing the Heart

The Story of the Farmers' Union

IF the writer gives a brief history of the Farmers' Union in these pages, it is because that organization took a leading part in bringing Uncle Reuben to Washington. It is, therefore, impossible to tell the tale of the agrarian struggle against hostile economic conditions, unsympathetic legislation and a splendidly organized lobby without giving the Farmers' Union a conspicuous place in the picture. It might not become the author to say on his own responsibility that the organization upon which he asks the reader for a brief period to focus his attention is the most effective of all self-help farm institutions. But this has repeatedly been said by others who are in a position to know and it would be no breach of decorum to give publicity to their views.

On a sunny September day, in a small town in the Lone Star State, ten men, nine of whom were by every accepted standard bankrupt, but living on hope, resolving that they would finally pay their debts, met and organized the Farmers' Union. To be exact, the time was the second day of September in the year 1902. The town was Smyrna, and the county was Raines. The meeting was held in the little country schoolhouse. It was an unpromising affair from the beginning. The most that the

majority of the ten expected was that they might in some way prevent things from becoming worse.

If they could induce their brother farmers to unite in a crusade for the betterment of agricultural conditions they would regard that as a worth-while achievement. Cotton, live stock, grain, and all the farmer produced, were gradually sinking in value. Debts were hourly accumulating. The farmers were reaping vast harvests of foreclosures and expulsions. They were then as they are now, in a great measure, the slaves of an economic condition to which they had themselves made no conscious contribution.

The cotton exchanges, the grain exchanges, the commission merchants and most all that host of middlemen who do what farmers ought to do for themselves—distribute their products—were living in clover. They collected their commissions. The farmers provided the stakes with which the manipulators gambled. They paid for the chips that these gentry tossed on the roulette wheel or threw into the poker pot.

"Things can't get worse and it is just possible they will get better," was the substance of what these devoted ten told each other. Although nine of them were, to use the common vernacular, "broke," they managed to borrow one thousand dollars to pay the initial cost of establishing an organization. They borrowed on character rather than on visible material assets and the sequel shows that the individual or organization which took the obligation of what might be called organized poverty had not

guessed wrong. In other words, the ten redeemed their united pledge.

The meeting was called by Newt Gresham, of Emory, Texas. Without loss of time they proceeded to the business of organizing themselves. Dr. Lee Seamster, a struggling country physician, was elected president; J. B. Morris, vice president; O. H. Rhodes, secretary; W. T. Cochran, treasuser; Newt Gresham, general organizer; and T. J. Pound, J. S. Turner, T. W. Donaldson, Jesse Adams, and W. S. Sisk, were chosen as directors. The whole organization was selected from the little town of Emory. There was something splendidly audacious in the fact that from an obscure town in Texas the officers of what was declared to be a national organization of primary producers were chosen. But these men had faith in the justice of their cause. They had little idea, however, of the magnitude of the structure that was in later years to be built upon the foundation which they had so securely laid. There was no chamber of commerce to greet them, no mayor to wish them well, no governor to give them Godspeed. If anything, they were regarded as interlopers on the field of organization. Railways may combine, banks may consolidate, commission houses may organize, steel men may associate for mutual benefit, but what right had Uncle Reuben to carry his protest against false economic conditions to the extent of organizing to resist them?

If the ten men who gave being to the Farmers' Union could have seen the organization as it is

today, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Lakes to the Gulf, with every commodity produced by the farmers of the United States represented, they would have been entranced by the picture. They built better than they knew. Moreover, these men, who had little besides their poverty and their honesty, unless, indeed, it be their vision, built soundly. It has not been found necessary to change, in any essential particular, the constitution that they wrote nor the by-laws which they formulated. The constitution which proved a pillar of strength for ten men has since become the guiding star for many times ten thousand men.

And these ten men had no great "foundations" upon which to draw and no Government agents to be placed at their disposal by an obliging Department of Agriculture. They knew a fact that has many times since been demonstrated, that the salvation of the farmer must be procured by himself or not at all. The structure for which the men of Texas laid the foundation was visualized to a certain extent at Lynchburg, Virginia, last November, when representative farmers from nearly every agricultural State in the Union met to tell what had been done during the past year and what they hoped would be accomplished in the year that is to come. But though the delegates adopted resolutions, announced policies, and inaugurated new activities, they did not change by a single line or the dot on an i the constitution promulgated by the devoted founders of the organization.

The delegates told the story of how the Farmers' Union, through cooperative effort, had done the previous year a combined business in excess of one billion five hundred million dollars. This is almost double the national debt of the United States before the World War forced us to assume another immense financial obligation. They told how they had organized banks, life insurance companies, livestock commission houses, fire insurance companies and a score of other new activities. They told how they had, through union of effort, saved the struggling farmers scores of millions of dollars on their fire insurance premiums, their farm machinery, their live stock, and their grain.

For ten men all from one tiny town, or township, in a Southwestern State, to organize and call themselves a national body was truly, according to the ordinary thinker, a presumptuous thing to do, but Holy Writ has taught us not to despise "the day of small things."

From the small beginnings at the Texas schoolhouse, evolved the mighty oraginzation which now extends from coast to coast, exerting an influence on state and National affairs, which men in public life deem it unwise to ignore. Men associated with the early struggles of the Farmers' Union have suffered martyrdom. They have been the victims of misrepresentation, calumny and persecution in all its bitter grades. Those who were able to survive the storm have lived to bless the day when the self-sacrificing founders got together and in their weakness showed that they were truly strong.

The initial success of the movement was assured by the organization not only of the material produce, but of the soul of those engaged in producing as well. It has often been said that some leaders have a complete understanding of the product. They know how to grade cotton, they know how to estimate the value of livestock, they are fully acquainted with the varying values of wheat and corn, but they are unable with any accuracy to appraise the men who sow, plant, or reap.

The Farmers' Union took root in a soil of fraternity. Its founders organized the heart. Sentiment that has been too often spurned in business was given a place of high esteem in this great self-help organization. Men got together, lived together, worked together, wept together and laughed together. Those who paid the price reaped a reward whose value cannot be estimated. They were not always victorious. Often they would witness what appeared to be ruinous secession from the ranks of the Union. Often their hearts would be torn and blistered by evidence of infidelity among leaders, who would beguile their followers by fair promises and conduct them into fields that proved to be barren either of substance or hope. Traitors temporarily seized the reins of state organizations and sometimes they would try to manipulate the National body. Then the pessimistic members of our order would throw up their hands and say "What's the use?"

But the organization smashed its way through every obstacle gathering strength and influence as

it proceeded. Local failures there were many. But after all, these were more apparent than real for the spirit of fraternity once inculcated is never fully expelled from the human heart. There never was a condition less auspicious than that which challenged the immortal ten, and to convert despair into hope, it is only necessary that we contemplate the grandeur of their achievement under circumstances which promised nought but failure.

Not only has the Farmers' Union spread itself across this continent, but in England and Continental Europe it has literally millions of acquaintances. It is known in many sections across the water almost as well as it is known in Kansas, Arkansas, Georgia, or Nebraka. It is impossible to conduct any campaign in the interests of agriculture without taking into the reckoning the Farmers' Union. The name given the organization by its founders was the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America. This name has never been changed, but it has become the common practice to designate it by the shorter title.

Shortly after the formation of the organization the question of building cooperative warehouses was agitated. As the months went by the vision of the founders began to take in a larger area. Some new and enthusiastic converts wanted to go faster than the machinery and finances of the organization would permit. This was a wholesome condition of mind. It showed that the heart was enlisted, but it was necessary to hold these gallant souls in check. The Farmers' Union found itself

opposed by intrenched self-interest everywhere. It could not move without encountering obstacles. Ignorance, prejudice, greed and fear were the quartet which it was compelled to overcome.

We found also that we were confronted by laws and systems which age, tradition and precedent had hallowed. These we encountered at every step of our way. To establish cooperative buying or selling organizations it was essential that we should first induce legislatures to adopt enabling laws. Great combinations of capital seeing that their privileges and immunities were threatened, or their field of operation and necessarily their revenues, would be restricted, battled with us in nearly every agricultural state in the Union. It would be perilous to them to have Uncle Reuben attending to his own business through agents or agencies of his own choosing.

It is not practicable to enumerate here the many battles we fought. It is only necessary to say that we never in the early days established a buying or selling agency without first running the gauntlet of whispered distrust, of misrepresentation, of injunctions and other legal processes which are used by special privilege to protect what it calls its rights.

One would think that the right of farmers to organize for mutual benefit is fundamental, but it appears that such a privilege can only be obtained through affirmative legislative enactment. Then again, finance sulked in its tent. Credit was tardy and insufficient when not altogether hostile. Look-

ing backward, my only wonder is that we were able to achieve even a partial triumph. When we wanted to do anything on a national scale we found that we were opposed by the Sherman anti-trust laws which many Federal Attorneys decided ought to be invoked against self-help cooperative Farm Organizations. So it was necessary that we fight a three-year battle in Washington before our status under the law could be determined. In this fight the Farmers' Union took a leading and effective part.

The writer is well aware that all the rituals that were ever written, all the by-laws that were ever compiled, all the constitutions that were ever assembled, would be valueless if the human heart remained cold and indifferent. But the record of the Farmers' Union establishes clearly our claim that this organization cooperated the soul as well as the material products of the members, and the first proclaimed purpose of this institution, "To secure equity, establish justice and apply the Golden Rule," is to the membership something more than a printed ideal. It has been received into the heart.

To say that the Farmers' Union would today be an inert, feeble institution if it had not organized the better emotions of its members is to make by no means an extravagant statement. Its purpose is magnificently expressed in one article of the constitution, which enjoins upon the members the obligation to "strive for harmony and goodwill among all mankind and brotherly love among ourselves." This makes its field universal and makes all man-

kind the beneficiaries of its exalted and altruistic service. It disposes of the charge made in some quarters that the farmers are exclusive thinkers trying to obtain for themselves benefits which they are unwilling to share with their urban brothers.

So in organizing the Farmers' Union the founders did not issue a challenge to the rest of the country. On the contrary, they opened the door of hope to all and invited all to enter. The picture is a glorious one. The ten knew that by improving the condition of agriculture they could not but contribute to the welfare of all who believe that man is entitled only to that which he honestly earns.

Immediately after the organization of the half score who constituted the nucleus of what, in later years, became a mighty institution, the cotton growers began to reap actual material benefits. In 1903 they got together and saved on ginning of cotton in Raines County, Tex., thousands of dollars. The Union for the State of Texas was organized at Mineola in February of 1904. In 1905 work of the initiators of the National Movement was confirmed at a convention held in Texarkana, where delegates from Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia answered to their names. It was there that the National Organization was actually created. In 1906 the North was invaded, and Illinois came into the organization. This action was followed by many other Northern States, answering the invitation of the Farmers' Union to come and join it.

In the twenty years that have gone since the cre-

ation of the organization over eight thousand business houses have been established, all owned and operated by members of the Union who manage them so well that failures are so few as to constitute an almost negligable factor. Cotton, wheat, corn, cream, eggs, butter, livestock are organized in many communities, and through mutual buying and selling the members are saved enormous sums annually.

Last year the livestock commission houses owned, operated and controlled by the Farmers' Union, sold something like one hundred and eighty million dollars' worth of cattle, sheep and hogs. The saving in commissions which would otherwise have been paid to old-line operators was enormous. Then there was an immense overhead saving that was distributed among the members. In every section of the country where the Farmers' Union now operates, the local organizations are creating buying and selling organizations and are thus cutting very deeply into the revenues and perquisites of the middlemen. They are demonstrating their capacity for the conduct of every kind of business.

A bank has been organized in Arkansas and a life insurance company in Iowa. Fire and hail insurance have long and profitably been conducted. At Salina, Kans., the home of the Farmers' Union Insurance Company, is in one of the finest office buildings in the Sunflower State. The management of the intricate business of insurance is such as to meet the unqualified approval of the insurance department of that State and also of neigh-

boring Commonwealths. The life insurance organization is so founded as to win the commendation and assent of the insurance department of the Hawkeye State, whose laws relating to insurance are of the most stringent kind.

As has been stated, the Farmers' Union does an aggregate cooperative business in excess of one and one-half billion dollars annually. This, however, does not tell the whole story. The organization has aided in creating cotton pools, tobacco pools, wool pools, dried fruit and other pools, which have saved the growers scores of millions of dollars.

No organization of farmers can have any lasting hope for long existence, or great achievement without a leadership wholeheartedly devoted to the cause it would serve. The Farmers' Union has sustained the hope of its founders for long existence, and justified the faith of its membership in achievements. Its history and its present strength are a tribute to the devoted souls, officers and members, who have been carrying on in the struggle during the long and trying years.

No organization ever had a more loyal and devoted corps of officers than the Farmers' Union. Below is a list of the National officials:

President, C. S. Barrett, Union City, Ga.

Vice President, E. L. Harrison, Lexington, Ky.

Secretary-Treasurer, A. C. Davis, Springfield, Mo.

National Board of Directors: George H. Bowles, Lynchburg, Va., Chairman; J. W. Batcheller, Secretary, Mission Hill, S. Dak.; John Tromble, Sa-

lina, Kans.; C. J. Osborne, Omaha, Neb.; J. M. Collins, Eaton, Colo.

National Lecturer and Organizer, W. C. Lansdon, Salina, Kans.

Honesty of heart, sincerity of purpose, unselfish motives, ambitions towards peace among mankind, have ever been the farmers' characteristics. It is on such a foundation that the Farmers' Union has been built. Its original declarations have stood the test of time and continue to exalt the heart and soul of a devoted people.

The Purposes of the organization as set forth concretely in the National Constitution of the Farmers' Union, are as follows:

To secure equity, establish justice and apply the Golden Rule.

To discourage the credit and morgage system.

To assist our members in buying and selling.

To educate the agricultural classes in scientific farming.

To teach farmers the classification of crops, domestic economy and the process of marketing.

To systematize methods of production and distribution.

To eliminate gambling in farm products by boards of trade, cotton exchanges and other speculators.

To bring farming up to the standard of other industries and business enterprises.

To secure and maintain profitable and uniform prices for cotton, grain, live stock and other products of the farm.

To strive for harmony and good will among all mankind and brotherly love among ourselves.

To garner the tears of the distressed, the blood of martyrs, the laugh of innocent childhood, the sweat of honest labor, and the virtue of a happy home as the brightest jewels known.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Beaming of a Great Light

AS things were arranged in the good old days when peasants were compelled to stay in the fields all night and keep the frogs quiet so that the lord of the manor might enjoy undisturbed rest, farmers, especially of the small-bore variety, had no business to concern themselves with politics. Their business was to produce. Marketing, financing, carrying and all matters of that kind would be attended to for them. To protest was to sign their own commitment to prison or to bare their backs to the public flagellator. They did, nevertheless, meet, ponder, talk and protest. They were getting practically nothing for their grain which was held by speculators or manipulators in the great wheat and corn receptacles at Versailles. The ragged workmen and workwomen of Paris were getting no bread and the royal exchequer was empty. Still, farmers mustn't protest. They must not noisily lament. They had the privilege of living or dying just as they chose. Many of them because of the absence of food necessary couldn't avail themselves of the royal permission to live, so they adopted the gracious recommendation that they could die. And die they did by scores, hundreds and thousands.

Of course, politicians will tell you that there are no conditions in this country which even remotely parallel those imperfectly described here. They

will tell you that the farmer is free; that there are no political strings on him; that he serves no master and that if dissatisfied with one section he can move on. If he doesn't like the work of growing wheat he can grow something else; if he wants to move to the city all he has to do is to sell out, rent his farm, buy a city residence and quit forever the occupation for which by training, education and inclination he is fitted. A beautiful idea. It is on a par with the statement that the American enjoys the great boon of liberty because if he can't pay for footwear he can go barefooted.

The only obstacle to the adoption by the farmers of what I might term this especially prepared philosophy is the existence in the farm mind of a deep-rooted conviction that the time is at hand when they ought to begin to collect what is due them. My dear and learned friend, Charles Edward Russell, states an incontrovertable truth when he says that farming ought to be the most profitable of all legitimate enterprises. It ought to furnish rewards for toil which would guarantee to those intelligently engaged in it the means for the enjoyment of a high standard of living. And yet the farmer, from one end of the country to the other, is impoverished.

He is thinking as he never thought before, not in terms of destructive bitterness, but in terms of constructive methods. He is rallying his forces for a contest the like of which the Nation has never before known. He has reached Washington, but he hasn't cashed in. He is determined, if I read him right, to do so. The vision of wealth which he con-

jured up a few years ago has vanished and in its place is left a cold picture of stern realities which he must grapple with and successfully meet if the liberty he rightly demands is ever to be his. Mr. Russell, writing in a calm and dispassionate manner, of North Dakota, says that less larceny and not greater economy is what is needed. Then he proceeds to tell, with convincing logic, the story of how the farmers of North Dakota had been systematically fleeced, plundered and robbed. Systems of checking, systems of banking, systems of weighing, systems of selling and systems of distributing, all faulty and some felonious, have been used to impoverish a class which ought to be prosperous, to enslave an activity which ought to be the freest on God's earth, to imprison effort and to fetter thought. Imponderable systems which interpose insuperable obstacles confront the tiller of the soil on every step of his weary road.

But North Dakota is only a part of an immense area that has been devastated by a system of plunder that would make a bank burglar by comparison seem respectacle. You can buy security against the depredations of the bank burglar in any good burglary insurance company. But against the depredations of the market manipulator, the grain gambler, the dealer in cotton futures and the money and credit shark there is no insurance at any premium. So the farmer is beginning to think. He is beginning to think collectively. The maddening paradox that he is the richest and yet the most impoverished being on earth is occupying his mind.

This conundrum demands an answer and he is trying to find it.

No, he has no threats to make. He has no enemies to punish, but there are obstacles which he must remove. Society demands it; self-preservation makes it absolutely necessary. It is impossible to proceed much longer with an industry having the bulk of a titan reduced in power to the proportions of a pigmy.

Thinking along these lines is it any wonder that the farmers of the United States are gradually but surely reaching the conclusion that there is in reality no system of distribution. There are, if you will, scores of methods of manipulation, illegal speculation, flimflam games, stacked cards and other means of fleecing both the consumers and producers. But as for a SYSTEM of distribution, it does not exist. It is, therefore, up to the farmers to create one. It will never be created for them. They will be fleeced, plundered and robbed just so long as they permit those over whom they have no control to direct their business for them. Uncle Reuben is thinking along these lines.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Remedy

UNCLE REUBEN, old fellow, your salvation is in your own hands. You have often complained that speeches which ring the bell and books which truly paint the story of your trials and tribulations, always end without offering a remedy. Now I am offering you a remedy. There are certain things you must do if you would be saved. You are not legally bound to do them, but if you neglect to do the things I recommend you must take the consequences. If you are too stupid, too lazy or too indifferent to make use of the remedy you mustn't blame the world or any portion of it for the sufferings which your family and yourself will be called upon to endure. Now these are among the things that you must or should do:

You must quit whining about not getting a square deal. Go and take a square deal.

You must quit being fooled either by your enemies or your friends and so inform your own mind that you will be able intelligently to take care of yourself. Use the manhood and the wit God has given you.

You must be suspicious of anybody who tells you not to go into politics either individually or collectively. The man who tells you that farmers should not take political action is either a fool or a hypocrite. Neither should be trusted and you will

betray yourself, your family and your calling by placing any confidence in such advisers.

You must go into politics and keep your eye on all officeholders, from road overseer to President of the United States. And you must be all the time in politics. If they don't do right, treat them like you would any other hired hand. Fire them.

You must not wait until the campaign is in full blast, when the smoke is thickest and when the time for deliberation has gone by. But keep your political eye open and your political brain active three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. And you must quit being a fool partisan.

Uncle Reuben, you must not be satisfied merely with electing a county commissioner, a sheriff or a member of the State legislature. Go after the top job and go after it determined to get it. Elect the President of the United States and see that he has a cabinet which will support your views and the views of the consumer who, in a very large sense, you are serving as agent and protector.

You must see that the men who are elected to office are of the right kind. Don't be satisfied with a speech or a promise. Be sure that you know before giving your support to any man for any office he is heart and soul, body and mind for you. Don't let any candidate get away with any mental reservation that will allow him to say to himself: "Well, I suppose I must go along now, but after Uncle Reuben has ranted and roared, cussed and fussed and kicked and bellowed for a while he will go to sleep and then I can serve my real masters."

You must determine the character of your candidate by other standards than usually are accepted during the heat of a campaign. You must know his associates, his antecedents and all about him. And you must be careful to attach little faith to eleventh-hour conversions to your ideas. Read all the records of every man who wants office; measure him by what he has done, not by what he promises to do.

You must go into cooperative business as well as cooperative politics. The man who tells you that you can not successfully engage in business is a liar and the truth is not in him.

You must not think that because a man has voted right and talked right on matters agricultural he is necessarily your friend. He may apparently be your friend in every way, but at the same time a whited political and economic sepulchre, full of dead men's bones. Examine the men who aspire to office either as your business or political representatives, both inside and out. Don't be satisfied with speeches on the rostrum or in the halls of Congress, although they may ring true. Go deeper and discover the motive which inspires action.

You must put more of your own men in office and see that they are your own. The fact that a man owns and operates a farm and draws most of his revenue from the soil does not necessarily make him one of you. He may, from compulsion, be on the soil, yet his heart may be in the center of some predatory organization. Office to him may mean

a stepping stone to the achievement of purpose really hostile to his fellow farmers.

You must not take excuses. The only thing that should count with you is results. Don't be fooled by the talk that a minority wouldn't let them do it. If the thing proposed is right and just and they are in deadly earnest, no power on earth can prevent it being done. And don't allow a public servant of yours to plead that a bad bill got through because the minority could not prevent it. An honest and earnest minority can nearly always prevent an evil measure from getting across.

Uncle Reuben you have been a fool from the day you came on earth and you know it. You have tried to do individually what you can only accomplish by organization. As an individual, Uncle Reuben, you are a joke, but acting in organization with your fellows you can make yourself irresistable.

You must organize. Its no excuse to say that your neighbor won't organize with you. Quit this cowardly business of passing the buck. Stop blaming your neighbor for your own faults and sins. You are more to blame than he is because you may be better informed. If you can't get your immediate neighbor to come in stop abusing him and get somebody else to join you. Go at this thing sincerely and soon you will have an organization which will be able to do something worth while not only for those who join you, but as well for those who refuse to join. You do some joining yourself and

it will not be long until your grouchy neighbor gets on the bandwagon. Its up to you.

You must be sure, however, before joining a farm organization that it is a real farm organization. If you will use your common sense you will not be fooled by the wolf in sheep's clothing.

You must stand by your friends, Uncle Reuben, and give your enemies hell. The Bible tells us that we should forgive those who offend against us even until seventy times seven. We may forgive the murderer, the housebreaker, the forger, the horse thief, the bank robber, the train bandit and all other sinners, but the man who rides into office on your votes and then fails to keep his promises to you should be followed with your resentment to the grave and even to the borderland of hades.

He should not be permitted to enjoy the shelter which retirement from office affords an honest man. His sins have not been against the individual, but against all humanity, so while we may forgive those who have offended us alone I find no warrant for the pardon of the arch criminal spoken of here.

The politicians who took an oath to do rightly and act justly brought on the deflation which cost you, Uncle Reuben, billions of dollars and spread starvation and woe among your friends in the cities who consume your products. The politician who is responsible for war, murder, rapine, poverty and desolation, in my judgment has forfeited the right of pardon by God or man. Moreover, if politicians in general were to know that juggling with the truth would cost them the enmity of all good citi-

zens forever afterwards, they would be more careful in the character of the promises they would make and would be more anxious to redeem the faith they had pledged to their constituents. The false promising politician is the chief of sinners and ought to be punished as no malefactor has hitherto been scorged.

Uncle Reuben, you are to a very great extent responsible for the disorganization of the world. If you had all had sense enough to organize for your own benefit and the benefit of honest consumers you would have saved humanity from much of the devilment that has afflicted us in recent years. You have the greatest stake in this country and what are you doing with it. You are making it a means of impoverishment of yourselves and your families instead of an instrument for human uplift. You are placing in the hands of the manipulators the very means through which they rob both you and your customers. And while you are doing this you are impotently cussing some little country merchant who has probably obtained from you about two cents more a yard for flannel than you think he ought to have obtained. Just quit lambasting this poor little fellow. Half of the time he is worse off than you. Reach the big offender.

You must patronize your local cooperative establishments and quit selling out for fifteen cents. If you would do this instead of grumbling your objections, more or less illfounded, to some official who might be directing the establishment, there would be some chance of getting results.

You must organize cooperative banks, insurance companies, grain, cotton, and other commodity distributing agencies. There are knaves and fools among you who say that you can't imagine such institutions with any hope of success. Just tell them they are mistaken. Don't argue with them, but proceed with the work in hand and you will get results.

You must elect or employ officers to manage your cooperative concerns who are willing to pay the price of loyal service. A part of this price is putting up with your own blamed foolishness. Put men in office who will not be discouraged through your own folly and throw down their tools or their books and quit. Get the right man for the right job; a fellow who will have such patience as to make the self-restraint exercised by Job sound like a cyclone, a tornado or an earthquake.

You must save the country. Why, Uncle Reuben, did it never occur to you that when you went on the land you assumed a responsibility to the world. You undertook to feed and clothe the rest of the country and the rest of the country trusted you to perform this task. You are operating an eighty billion dollar property. If it were not for the property you operate, the country might just as well be completely abandoned. But when you went on the soil you were expected to know something of the problems of your country. Instead of assiduously acquiring this knowledge and applying it you have allowed others to do the governing and in doing so you have permitted them not only to

pillage you, but to pillage your customers as well. Uncle Reuben, you had no right to do this. You should give a better account of your stewardship.

Get into the governing game. Without government there can be no organized society and society can not be well organized with one-third of the people taking no effective part in government. Now, gird your loins and go after your rights because in obtaining your own rights you necessarily assure the rights which belong to the consumers.

Uncle Reuben, while you may feel that you have a right to injure yourself by abstaining from taking part in business, in politics and in finance, you certainly have no right to injure the millions of honest citizens in the cities who depend so much on you. A lot of them think that you are responsible for the high prices they are paying. They think you are getting the profits. They think you are living on the fat of the land while they struggle for a meager existence. This makes it all the more necessary that you should do something, not for yourself alone, but to relieve their plight.

You've got to quit saying "I will do my part." Any man worth his salt will do more than his part.

You've got to quit saying you are not qualified for business, politics or finance and that you have not the power to take your proper place in the world. The world does not hate you. It is not your enemy. It simply wants to get what you have or what you can produce and get it at the least possible expense in money and toil. The world will estimate you according to your own appraisal of

yourself. If you say that you can't organize and attend to your own marketing, financing and distribution the world will believe you and go on doing these things for you, fleecing both you and those you feed and clothe.

And, dear Uncle Reuben, if the world adopts such a policy in relation to you it will be because you have confessed yourself unable to navigate. Shame on you. Shake yourself and arise in your might and do what God and nature designed you should do. If you organize for business and conduct your own business the world will not get mad. It will simply rub its eyes and say, "Why, Uncle Reuben, didn't you come in before?" When finance, industry and commerce see that you are able to attend to your own business and that you are determined to do it they will welcome you and declare that you should have long since been among them.

You must learn to work with the fellow you don't like. What business have you to clog the wheels of cooperative progress simply because one man in a company of workers has something in his makeup which doesn't please you? You are engaged in a public calling and you must do your duty or take the consequences.

You have got to treat your own family better. You have treated the other fellow's family pretty well. You, have bought magnificent furniture, priceless jewelry, limousines, art galleries and other luxuries for those who finance you and distribute your products, but you have worked your wife and

family almost to death. It's no use your wailing that you couldn't help it. You could help it. If you had organized, gone into politics, finance and cooperative business these inequities would not have occurred. You can remedy the situation spoken of here and you can remedy practically all the economic evils that afflict us. To say otherwise is to admit your own weakness and write you down incompetent.

You must quit voting for a man wholly and solely because he is able to appeal to your prejudices and stir your sympathies. Try to find the actor in the man and then it will be easy to discover what he proposes to gain by camouflage.

You must find out just why apples that sell in Oregon at a dollar a box cost the consumer in Washington, D. C., ten dollars, and why you don't get a share of the difference. You owe to the consumer the duty of solving this problem and you can solve it by forcing men who represent you in Congress to discover the truth.

You must try to educate the millions of people in the cities, who understand nothing of the problems of the farmer, to your views. The town has been trying for many years to educate the tillers of the soil, now Uncle Reuben, you must reverse this order and begin to educate the town.

You must not be beguiled by the "nice" farmer, who has benevolently taken upon himself the task of getting your mind to go in the right direction. Before following him see whether he is going where agriculture ought to go. He may pull you up to

him, or reduce you to a lower level than you have already reached.

Now, Uncle Reuben, you can't do any worse than you have done. You are plastered with mortgages and poulticed with debts. So get into the organized marketing and distributing business. But see that the heart is organized. Quit fussing and cussing as you go along. Keep all your kicks for your enemies and all your pulls for your friends. Be ready to be spent in the service, but don't believe for an instant that the outside world will expend itself for you.

Don't cuss about what the world is doing to you. Go out and GET what the world will never GIVE you. Collect your earnings in the future and don't depend upon the generosity of the world to collect them for you.

Uncle Reuben, don't get the idea into your head that you are better than other folks. You are just as mean, just as selfish, just as unholy as some of those you cuss and criticize. You can cure yourself of these moral defects by getting active in the cause of the Nation's salvation. It is a curious fact that while saving the Nation you will collect what is your due. In fact, it can be done in no other way.

If you can't do better than you have done in the past just quit the soil and go to town where you may be able to practice law, become an alderman or get on the police force. But, for Heaven's sake, quit whining and whittling and do something for yourself and the country.

Uncle Reuben, it's up to you.

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Temple of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

JACOB H. TAYLOR, Editor

Medium of the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America

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The most powerful influence in the political and economic life of the Nation is the organized farmer. A truthful chronicle of political developments and farmer organization affairs will be found in this Farmers publication:

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